

**WORKING ON TALK: THE COLLABORATIVE SHAPING
OF LINGUISTIC SKILLS WITHIN CHILD-ADULT INTERACTION**

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DECLARATION

A few of the ideas presented in this study, and an earlier version of small parts of the data analysis, have appeared in print in the following publications:-

Tarplee, C. 1989. Confirmation and repair: an interactional analysis of redoing sequences in child-adult talk. York Papers in Linguistics 14. 279-296.

Tarplee, C. 1990. Adult's *imitations* and *repetitions* in child-adult talk: why terminology matters. Language: Usage and Description, ed. by I. Tieken-Boon van Ostade & J. Frankis, 59-68. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

ABSTRACT

This study presents the results of a detailed linguistic analysis of some naturally-occurring interactions taking place between children aged 1;6 to 2;3 and their caretakers. The investigation employs techniques derived from ethnomethodological conversation analysis, and is directed towards an uncovering of the design of adult-child talk, in such a way as to reveal those structures within it by which a young child's linguistic productions are 'worked on'. This work takes the form of clarification, correction and affirmation, and is seen to be accomplished collaboratively by the talk's participants, through a variety of means.

A large part of the study focusses on the design of the interactions which occur between adult and child when they are engaged in labelling from picture books. Through this analysis, some constituent features of a didactic style of talk are identified. A comparison with more 'mundane' conversational interactions between child and adult demonstrates that a young child's everyday interactions share many of the didactic features of picture book labelling talk.

The findings of this study suggest a reconceptualisation of the notion of the child's 'linguistic environment', as it has been conceived in a research tradition addressed to uncovering the details of 'child directed speech'. By refining this concept with a focus on the structure of the interactions in which young children routinely engage, the study suggests a new direction for this research tradition, in pointing to the delicate 'language lessons' which are constituted through fine details of the design of ordinary child-adult talk.

INTRODUCTION

There is a long tradition of research in child language study which has been addressed to describing, manipulating and understanding the nature of the linguistic environment which forms the context within which the young child develops language skills. This environment has traditionally been defined as constituted by the linguistic input which children receive from the adults who talk to them. Much research endeavour has therefore been directed to describing and assessing the nature of that input and the role which it may play in facilitating the progress of the child's language development.

However, this study will argue that to conceive of the child's linguistic environment in terms of an adult 'input' - to isolate the adult's contributions from the interactions into which they are embedded - is to paint a distorted picture of that environment. Studies which pursue an understanding of the context in which the young child develops linguistic skills, by coding and quantifying features of the adult's utterances in an interactional exchange, can offer only a poor representation of the nature of that context, and few insights into the ways in which it may be facilitative of the child's linguistic advancement.

This study addresses the same broad question as that which has motivated the numerous studies in this research tradition. It proposes that features of the developing child's linguistic environment can indeed be pointed to as having an important part to play in the language development process. However, it approaches the question with a very different view of how the child's linguistic environment is to be conceived. Adopting the techniques of conversation analysis, it focusses on the structure of the jointly constructed interactions in which adults and young children engage, in order to assess the extent to which issues pertaining to the child's developing linguistic abilities are 'worked on' through the design of the talk.

This 'working on talk' which is a central theme of the study, refers to the means by which turns at talk may be designed and fitted to one another in such a way that a current turn may be directly addressed to evaluating, investigating, or correcting some aspect of a prior turn in an exchange. That is, it reflects the ways in which talk may at times be directly addressed to the efficacy of its own construction. There are many ways in which participants in an interaction may be said to work on the talk which they produce. Some features of adult-child talk, for instance, could be said to be bound up with working on the child's INTERACTIONAL skills, by explicitly attending to issues of turn-taking or intelligibility and repairing problems caused by breakdown in these areas. This study considers only a selection of phenomena which may be placed under this broad heading of 'working on talk'. Here, the focus of attention is on the ways in which LINGUISTIC aspects of the child's contributions are attended to through the design of the talk, such that a delicate form of 'language lesson' could be said to be embedded into the interactions in which adults and young children participate. The study suggests that child-adult interactions are regularly constructed in such a way as to accomplish this kind of linguistically-oriented didactic work, and that an investigation into the structures they employ to do this can lead to a much more sophisticated understanding of the ways in which the child's linguistic environment is implicated in the language development process. It is not claimed here that the didactic structures identified as accomplishing this work are solely or consciously (on the part of the participants) addressed to the task of linguistic instruction. Nor is an attempt made to derive any kind of measure for assessing the extent to which features of this didacticism may influence the child's linguistic growth. It is difficult, at this stage in our knowledge of the workings of interactive talk, to see how an empirical investigation could generate and sustain warranted claims in either of these areas. Instead, the study is addressed to an in-depth interactional analysis of a collection of sequences of adult-child talk, in order to uncover and understand the fine details of the didactic mechanisms at work within them.

The first chapter of the study locates the work being presented in relation to the child language literature. By means of a short overview of work in the field, it presents an argument that linguistic research into children's language development, while it has shifted away from its early preoccupation with formal, syntactic concerns to encompass an interest in pragmatic aspects of the child's developing skills, has nonetheless not generally taken an interactional approach to the data which it describes. A critique is presented of the particular research tradition which has been concerned with exploring the nature of 'child directed speech', in order to point up the methodological and conceptual difficulties faced by this line of investigation; and a rationale is offered for the reconceptualisation of the notion of the child's linguistic environment which this study proposes. The tradition of conversation analysis (CA), an approach to the analysis of interactive talk developed within the ethnomethodological school of sociology, is then put forward as offering appropriate and delicate techniques for the analysis of data throughout the study. The contributions already made to the field of children's language by work undertaken in this tradition are briefly assessed, and an argument is advanced that CA offers the means to a particularly sensitive LINGUISTIC analysis of interactional data.

This discussion is followed in Chapter Two by a brief consideration of some procedural issues relating to the nature, collection and representation of the data which forms the basis for analysis throughout the following chapters. Here, the status of context in interactional analyses of talk is discussed, and attention is given to the methods used in data collection. Finally, consideration is made of the role of transcription in linguistic analysis, and the transcription conventions used throughout the study are outlined.

Chapters Three, Four and Five present a body of data analysis which investigates the design of adult-child interactions during a particular activity - the labelling of pictures from picture books. This particular data was selected for analysis, as it represents a

specifically didactic activity which is explicitly concerned with testing and working on certain of the child's developing linguistic abilities. It therefore provides a good starting-point for an investigation into the constituent features of this kind of didacticism. Chapter Three begins this analysis by presenting the results of an initial, systematic progression through the 100 sequences of picture labelling talk which constitute the picture book corpus. This chapter thus paints a picture of the basic design of labelling interaction, giving some indication of the proportional frequency of the patterns identified within it.

This analysis is taken further in Chapters Four and Five, which explore in more depth the ways in which linguistic aspects of the child's productions are worked on within picture book talk. Chapter Four focusses on the attention given to the child's lexical skills as displayed in the act of labelling, and considers the devices which are used for the initiation of repair on the child's lexical choice. It is found that, in contrast to patterns of repair-initiation documented for mundane talk between adults (Schegloff et al. 1977), opportunities for the child to initiate repair on her or his own labelling choices is diminished. The chapter also considers the obverse of repair, by identifying the means by which affirmation of the child's lexical choice is accomplished through the recurrence of an adult receipting turn following each labelling action. Both features suggest a pattern of interaction whereby the child is awarded reduced responsibilities for engaging in a critical monitoring of the talk produced.

Chapter Five turns to a further area of linguistic ability which is foregrounded in picture book talk - the child's articulatory skills. Again, consideration is given to the accomplishment of both repair and non-repair on this aspect of the child's productions. Here, a detailed phonetic analysis uncovers some of the prosodic cues by which these two opposing kinds of work are distinguished in the adult's turns. In particular, the role of prosodic contrastivity in the accomplishment of correction is

explored, as well as the various ways in which this kind of contrastivity is minimised in turns which do the work of affirmation.

Finally, Chapter Six extends this analysis into a consideration of more mundane, non-labelling interactions occurring between adult and child, in order to come some way towards uncovering the extent to which the didactic mechanisms at work in picture labelling interactions are also characteristic of the more everyday interactions in which young children routinely engage. The chapter begins by summarising and assessing the findings of the preceding three chapters, so as to arrive at a clearer picture of the constituent features of labelling talk, and the way in which these features are implicated in the work of 'doing instructing'. These findings are then used as the basis for a comparative investigation of the conversational corpus. It is found that didactic features can indeed be identified in these interactions, particularly in the recurrence of adult receipting turns which, in the same way as those found in labelling sequences, treat a variety of prior child turns as linguistic displays, and evaluate them on linguistic terms. Many of the adult's turns in the conversational corpus are found to have a retrospective focus on the child's prior productions, rather than looking ahead to the projection of further talk, and thus to be occupied with working on the child's talk in a variety of ways. The findings of the study thus suggest some particularly delicate ways in which the young child's linguistic environment is implicated in the progression of early language development.

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATIONS IN CHILD LANGUAGE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Linguistic investigations into children's language development have tended to take one of two courses, and consequently to have relied on one of two kinds of data to bring evidence to bear on their concerns. Some researchers have been principally interested in the system which the child acquires, and so have looked to the child's speech productions for evidence to inform their analyses. Others, focussing on the potentially facilitative nature of the environment in which language skills develop, have looked instead to the speech used by adults when addressing children. Few studies, however, have made it their business to conduct a detailed investigation of the interactional structure of the talk which occurs between adult and child. The aim of this chapter is to consider why this has been so, and to point to some of the gains which might be made towards a greater understanding of the process of language acquisition, by adopting such a focus.

Following a short review of the child language literature in the following section, section 1.3 will consider in more detail that strand of child language research which has been concerned with the language addressed to children. It will be seen that the insights gained by this research have been limited by a failure to appreciate the interactional nature of talk. In the light of this discussion, the rationale and aims of the present study will be set out. Section 1.4 will introduce the methodological framework of conversation analysis, and will explicate its suitability as the approach to be adopted in the analysis of adult-child interaction presented in subsequent chapters. Finally, section 1.5 will draw together the arguments presented in this chapter, and will outline the direction taken by the analysis which forms the bulk of this study.

My concern in the following section, then, is to illustrate, by means of a brief overview of some of the major research strands in the field of child language, the way in which linguists studying children's language development have not generally taken an approach to the analysis of their data which takes full account of the interactional nature of the talk in which young children engage.

1.2 TOWARDS INTERACTIONAL CHILD LANGUAGE RESEARCH

1.2.i Psychological and Ethological Child Language Research

From the inception of child language study as a research discipline, a substantial proportion of the work carried out in this field has approached the subject from a psychological or ethological perspective, considering the child's developing language skills as just one, albeit prominent, feature in the wider picture of the child's development. Vygotsky (1962), for instance, (whose work was first published in Russian in 1934) is centrally concerned with the interdependence of language and thought in the process of the child's cognitive development. From this research perspective, attention has certainly been directed towards social and communicative factors in the child's development of language, since the child's interaction with others has been seen, by some at least, as playing an important part in the development of cognition. Vygotsky counters the claims made by Piaget (1926) for the egocentrism of child thought, by taking a standpoint which asserts that

The primary function of speech, in both children and adults, is communication, social contact.
(Vygotsky 1962: 19)

This research tradition is continued more recently in the work of Bruner (1977, 1983) and in the work of Trevarthen (1974, 1977, 1986, 1987, Sylvester-Bradley and Trevarthen 1978). Bruner is concerned with the young child's entry into a culture, and developing ability to communicate with other members of that culture. For Bruner, communication is central, not only to WHAT the child is learning, but also to the learning

process itself. The linguistic skills which the child develops are seen as essentially communicative rather than being viewed in abstract, structural terms; and the process of acquisition of those skills is taken to be an interactional one, since it is through social interaction with a member of the culture that the child gains admission to it. In the same tradition, Trevarthen's work takes a detailed descriptive approach to instances of pre-linguistic mother-infant interaction, and is centrally concerned with the interaction *per se*, rather than with the individual behaviours of one or other of the participants. Like Bruner, Trevarthen emphasises the importance of adult-child interaction as providing the means by which cognitive and language development take place, but he focusses his observations on the pre-verbal "proto-conversations" (1986) which take place between mother and infant, by means of vocalisations and facial and bodily gestures. Central to Trevarthen's work is the notion of 'intersubjectivity' or the "harmonious and reciprocal states of consciousness and intentionality" (1987: 3) which are entered into by means of social interaction, and which give rise to, and facilitate, the child's learning and development.

In a psychological and ethological tradition, then, the communicative and interactional aspects of the child's developing language have been awarded a place of importance. However, the same is not generally true of child language research conducted in a linguistic tradition, where researchers have tended, not only to divorce the child's language from the interactional context in which it occurs, but also to abstract from that language, as an object of study, a structural system which largely ignores the communicative complexities which are an inherent part of it. Since my concerns in this study are primarily linguistic, it is to this research tradition that the following brief and highly selective overview is addressed. The argument which I will be propounding is that the interactional features of talk, which have by and large been overlooked, must be regarded as a linguistic concern within the field of child language study.

1.2.ii Child Language Research In A Linguistic Tradition

Research into child language which has been carried out in a linguistic tradition has tended to be guided by the prevailing concerns of linguistic theory, and to have shifted in emphasis along with developments in theoretical linguistics. In the 1960s and early 1970s, when the field of linguistics was dominated by syntactic interests, child language researchers were largely concerned with developing syntax-oriented models of children's linguistic systems. An early example is the pivot grammar model which arose from the work of Braine (1963). From the mid 1960s, it was the role which Chomsky's Transformational Grammar (Chomsky 1965) outlined for language acquisition which governed the nature of child language research. Chomsky's model gives emphasis to the description of language as a formal system, and to the construction of grammars. The child engaged in the language acquisition process is seen as facing a task not unlike that of the linguist - to construct an adequate generative grammar of a language on the basis of exposure to an 'input' of 'primary linguistic data'. The child is able to perform this task by virtue of being genetically endowed with a Language Acquisition Device - an innate knowledge of linguistic universals, by the aid of which a grammatical rule system for the language can be derived from the 'degenerate' corpus of adult speech which forms the child's linguistic environment. The precise nature of that linguistic environment is largely ignored in studies adopting this framework.

Following the inclusion of a semantic component in Chomsky's 1965 model of grammar, the 1970s saw a shift in emphasis from syntax to semantics in prevailing linguistic models, and accordingly in studies of child language. For example, in the case grammar model (Brown 1973, Bowerman 1973) it is the meanings in the child's speech which take precedence over syntactic form. Recourse is therefore made to the context (both linguistic and non-linguistic) of the child's utterances, in order to arrive at those meanings, although attention is still focussed on the formal system which the

child is acquiring. A more pragmatic orientation to child language arose following the emergence of speech act theory, as developed by Searle (1969, 1972) from the ideas of Austin (1962). An example is the work of Dore (1975), who outlines a model for the child's conversational development in terms of the conversational acts which the child must be able to perform, and the illocutionary functions of those acts.

In all of this work, the focus of attention is on WHAT the child is acquiring, whether that is viewed primarily as a syntactic system, a semantic system or a communicative system. And even in the latter case, interest lies very much with the child's productions and the child's abilities, rather than with the interactions in which the child engages. This is illustrated quite clearly in Halliday's (1975) functional approach to child language study, which he promisingly defines as one in which

the learning of the mother tongue is interpreted as a process of interaction between the child and other human beings (1975: 5-6).

Despite this claim, Halliday's concern is much more with the child's competence and demonstrated ability to partake in talk and to adopt social roles, than it is with the interactional process itself. 'Dialogue' is viewed as one among a number of competencies to be acquired by the child along with the grammatical system of the language. For example, Halliday notes of the subject in his longitudinal study,

Nigel learnt to engage in dialogue at the same time as he started to learn vocabulary,...(just before 18 months)... (1975: 48).

The ability to engage in dialogue is broken down into a list of skills, such as the ability to respond to a WH-question, to respond to a statement, to initiate dialogue, and so on. The focus is not on how the interaction is negotiated by its participants, but simply on what the child can do.

This line of research is followed in investigations of the interactions occurring between children - by Garvey (1977), who adopts a speech act framework for analysing the conversational skills demonstrated in the child-child interactions of three to five year olds, and more recently by McTear (1985), who presents a detailed description of certain phenomena such as initiation of exchanges, requests, turn-taking and repair, occurring in the conversations between two children, also between the ages of three and five. Like Garvey, McTear's major concern is to gain

some insight into what young children have to acquire in order to become mature conversationalists
(McTear 1985: 2).

This kind of research is valuable in stressing the communicative aspects of the skills which the child is acquiring, but it tends to treat these skills as something separate from the linguistic abilities which are being learned. The conversational skills outlined by Dore, Halliday, Garvey and McTear bear similarities to the notion of 'communicative competence' developed by Hymes (1972). For Hymes, the child must acquire, **ALONGSIDE** a competence for grammar,

competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner
(1972: 277).

Communicative competence is seen as something **ADDITIONAL** to linguistic competence - as a set of rules and procedures (a kind of instruction manual accompanying the mechanism of the grammar) which must be followed if the child's linguistic knowledge is to be appropriately employed.

Thus, while the focus of child language study in recent years has moved away from the exclusively syntactic and semantic models of the 1960s and 1970s, and has awarded increasing importance to the pragmatic and communicative aspects of a child's talk as a necessary object of study in the field, these aspects have been seen as standing

somewhat outside the realm of the child's genuinely LINGUISTIC skills, and as something separable from the study of the child's linguistic (usually grammatical) development. It is my view, however, that it is neither desirable nor possible to make this kind of separation.

1.2.iii. An Interactional Approach

In this study, I am concerned to explicate in detail the linguistic exponency of various features of the talk-in-interaction which routinely occurs between adults and young children, and to consider the means by which issues relating to the child's developing linguistic skills are addressed in that talk. I am therefore concerned both with the linguistic environment in which language learning takes place, and also, although less centrally, with the linguistic skills which are learned. My argument here is that both of these aspects of child language - WHAT is acquired, as well as the process and context of acquisition (which I will consider in the following section) - require an interactional perspective if they are to be properly examined; and that such a perspective is not only a matter for sociologists and psychologists, but is of LINGUISTIC importance. This viewpoint, which looks to interactional talk in general as a fundamental site for linguistic investigation, was propounded by Firth as early as 1935, but has been obscured in later approaches to linguistic enquiry. In his paper "The Technique of Semantics" Firth states,

Neither linguists nor psychologists have begun the study of conversation; but it is here we shall find the key to a better understanding of WHAT LANGUAGE REALLY IS AND HOW IT WORKS (my emphasis)
(1935: 32).

The point to be made from this observation is that a study of talk-in-interaction is not only of interest in its own right, and as giving insight into the study of social relations and human psychological processes, but that it is of central LINGUISTIC significance. That is, we shall gain a clearer picture of what language actually is, by examining the fine details of the ways in which participants engage in communicative talk with one

another. The language which the child is learning is most usefully seen, in my view, not as a rather abstract formal system which is USED, or applied, in interactional settings, but as a polysystemic interactional entity itself. And if one subscribes to this view it follows that the most useful way to study child language, for linguistic insights just as much as for ethological ones, is to examine the interactive talk in which children routinely engage. This is what linguists working in the field of child language have generally not done, and is part of what this study sets out to do.

1.2.iv The Environment Of Acquisition

In this section, I have focussed on those studies of child language which are concerned with WHAT the language-learning child is acquiring, rather than with studies of the acquisition process itself or of the context of acquisition. I have suggested that what the child acquires is not an abstract formal system with a set of rules for its use in various social contexts, but a system whose very systemicity is inextricably bound up with the interactional work performed by its various components. However, of more central concern to this study than WHAT is acquired by the child, is the environment in which the learning takes place. My interests lie principally with the talk, occurring between adult and child, which forms the context of linguistic development, and more particularly with the extent to which that talk addresses (overtly or covertly) issues relating to the child's developing language. That is, features (and particularly didactic features) of the child's linguistic environment are what are at issue. The concerns of this study, then, bear closely on those of a strand of child language research which has focussed on the language-learning child's linguistic environment, by considering the nature of the speech which is addressed to children. This research tradition, which has itself undergone many developments, will therefore be considered in some detail in the following section. The motivation behind presenting here a selective overview and critique of the research conducted into the language addressed to children, is to substantiate an argument that researchers investigating the linguistic context of language

acquisition, like those investigating the language acquired, have by and large done so without due regard for the interactional nature of talk.

1.3 THE LANGUAGE ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN

A strong research tradition, within the field of child language, has focussed attention, not on the linguistic system which the developing child acquires, but on aspects of the environment in which language learning takes place, and particularly on the speech which adults address to children. Early interest in this area centred on the characterisation of 'baby talk' as a speech style or register. As early as 1964, Ferguson was concerned to develop the notion of baby talk by examining its occurrence in six diverse languages. Later (Ferguson 1977) he argued that baby talk demonstrates the use of universal linguistic 'simplifying' processes which are used in addressing not only children but also adults who are deemed in some way not to be linguistically competent. This area of interest developed rapidly among child language researchers following Chomsky's claims for the innateness of specific language faculties in the child (Chomsky 1965). Since Chomsky's model paid little attention to the environment of language learning, instead accounting for linguistic development almost solely in terms of the genetic attributes of the child, it was felt that this 'innateness hypothesis' could be put to the test by a closer examination of the 'input' which children receive - the kind of language which mothers and other caretakers use when talking to young children. In the 1970s, and to a lesser extent the 1980s, much research was addressed to this examination, largely with a view to identifying those features of the speech directed to children which might be shown to be facilitative of language acquisition and development.

The terms used to refer to this adult speech have changed with shifting emphases within the enterprise. 'Baby talk' (Ferguson 1964) gave way to 'motherese' (e.g. Newport 1977), which in turn gave way to 'child directed speech' (Snow 1986), in recognition

of the fact that the style of talk being described is not restricted to mothers. Nonetheless, inherent in all of these terms is a perspective on the speech being described which frames it as an essentially UNIDIRECTIONAL phenomenon, and which obscures the interactional nature of the talk which takes place between adult and child. Throughout this strand of research, the adult speech under investigation is viewed (and often described) as 'input' - as if language acquisition is to be regarded as a linear computational process, whereby linguistic 'input' is processed by the child's cognitive apparatus, and results in the 'output' of the child's linguistic productions. Such a view not only treats the adult's speech as an isolable, qualifiable and quantifiable part of the equation: it manifestly fails to take account of the interactional complexities of talk.

While the impetus behind this kind of research is an important one, and while the analysis presented in the following chapters of this study is addressed to very similar issues, the approach taken in this study is fundamentally different. In order to explicate that difference, and to illustrate some of the problems which have constrained these earlier studies into the language addressed to children, the remainder of this section will be concerned with a more detailed consideration of aspects of this research tradition. I shall first of all outline some of the features which have been associated with 'child directed speech' (a term which I will retain as a convenient shorthand for the object of these studies), and then consider some of the functions credited to these features, and the means by which their effects on the child's linguistic development have been tested. Finally, I shall consider the role of child directed speech in 'learnability' models of language acquisition.

1.3.i Features Of Child Directed Speech

Child directed speech has generally been regarded as a bundle of features constituting an identifiable speech register - a modification of the ordinary language used between adults - typically adopted by adults (and to some extent by children: see Shatz and Gelman 1973) when interacting with young children. In what follows I will briefly

outline the most commonly described features of the register, and then give critical consideration to the ways in which these features have been categorised and defined, using for illustration the example of 'expansions' and other kinds of repetition.

Researchers in this tradition have directed attention to syntactic, phonetic, semantic and pragmatic features of the language used by adults when interacting with children. Such speech has been characterised as well-formed (counter to Chomskyan claims for the degeneracy and ungrammaticality of the 'input' in the acquisition equation (see Miller and Chomsky 1963)), and also as syntactically simple. Syntactic simplicity is a notion notoriously difficult to qualify, but has been applied to child directed speech on the basis of observation of a short mean length of utterance, few subordinate clauses, few conjunctions, few past tenses, and a short mean pre-verb length (Snow 1977, 1986). Some researchers, however (Newport 1977, Newport, Gleitman and Gleitman 1977), have argued that child directed speech is actually syntactically complex, despite these features, since it contains a high proportion of questions and imperatives - sentence types which in a transformational model of grammar show a relatively high degree of deviation from deep structure when compared with declaratives. Phonetically, this style of speech has been described as slow, as employing high pitch, and as having "an exaggerated intonation pattern" (Snow 1977: 36), which probably refers to a wide pitch range and a dense pattern of stress (Garnica 1977). It has also been characterised as being semantically restricted to the here and now of the child's immediate environment, and as being "redundant" (Snow 1977, 1986), on the basis of a high frequency of repetitions of various kinds, both repetitions of prior adult utterances, and also repetitions (especially expansions) of the child's productions.

This kind of adult reproduction of a child's utterances is a pervasive feature of the data to be considered in this study, and plays an important part in the 'working on talk' which this study describes. To redo another's utterance in talk is to pick that utterance up and display it for some kind of work to be done on it. That work may be corrective,

evaluative or investigative; may be immediate or delayed; and may be undertaken by the 'redoer', by the speaker of the original utterance, or by both collaboratively. An adult's reproductions of a child's utterances therefore carry out many interactional functions (which will be elaborated in later chapters) and may be seen to be closely bound up with the ways in which a child's linguistic skills are directly addressed in adult-child interaction. Since various kinds of these reproductions have recurrently featured in investigations of child directed speech throughout the history of this line of research, and since they also play a major part in the data under investigation in this study, this particular feature, or set of features, will serve as a convenient example by which to illustrate the approach which has been taken in classifying the characteristics of a child directed speech register. By means of this illustration I intend to point up the difficulties faced in taking a quantificational approach to interactional data, which relies on a categorisation of speech features based on the structural distinctions between objects, without careful regard to their interactional functions.

Expansions and repetitions

Adult reproductions of children's utterances are considered in most of the studies which have undertaken a general examination of the language typically addressed to young children. One kind of reproduction - the expansion - has attracted particular interest. Brown and Bellugi (1964) first drew attention to the phenomenon of expansions when they observed that adults, in reproducing children's utterances, very often 'fill out' the 'telegraphic' speech which is typical of young children acquiring language, rendering a syntactically well-formed version of what the child is perceived to have been trying to say. Brown and Bellugi (1964: 143) make the following suggestion regarding the use of expansions:

By adding something to the words the child has just produced one confirms his response in so far as it is appropriate. In addition one takes him somewhat beyond that response but not greatly beyond it. One encodes additional meanings at a moment when he is most likely to be attending to the cues that can teach that meaning.

This view of expansions as "an effective tutorial technique" (Brown and Bellugi 1964: 143) has led to a focus on this particular kind of reproduction in investigations which are motivated by an interest in the "linguistic nutritiousness" (Wootton 1981c: 99) of child directed speech. Other kinds of reproduction, such as straight repetition, have also been considered, but less extensively.

A first point to note about the selection of expansions and other kinds of reproductions of child utterances as a feature of child directed speech, is that they have invoked an extensive terminology and a wide range of overlapping formal definitions in the literature. For Brown and Bellugi (1964), an expansion retains all the words of the child's utterance, in the same order, while adding new words and morphemes to form a syntactically well-formed sentence. Some investigators have drawn a distinction between this kind of expansion and 'imitations', 'repetitions' or 'echoes', where the adult repeats the exact form of the child's utterance, without expanding it (Nelson 1973, Seitz and Stewart 1975, Harkness 1977, Barnes et al. 1983). Cross (1977) makes the further distinction between 'exact' and 'partial' 'imitations' (in contrast to 'expansions'), while for Newport (1977) all reproductions are 'imitations', being either 'exact', 'exact plus' (expansions), 'partial' or 'partial plus', depending on the formal relationship between the child and adult versions. Nelson (1977) uses the term 'recasting' to cover all adult utterances which retain the meaning but change the form of a child's prior utterance; while Seitz and Stewart (1975) extend the field further with 'modifications', a term which encompasses contradictions and reductions, as well as expansions, of children's utterances. And expansions themselves have been subdivided. Cross (1977), for example, distinguishes between 'complete' and 'incomplete' expansions on the grounds of grammaticality; and within the category of 'complete expansions' she draws a further distinction between those which are 'elaborated' and those which are 'transformed', on the basis of a more detailed formal comparison between the two utterances in question.

A wide range of distinctions have been drawn, then, between categories of reproductions, on the basis of the formal (usually lexical and syntactic) relationship between child and adult versions. There have also been different characterisations of these objects according to their sequential placement. For some researchers, only those reproductions which follow immediately from the child utterance of which they are a version are considered; for others, the reproductions under investigation may be separated from the child's utterance by varying amounts of intervening talk. Cross (1978), for example, only considers reproductions occurring within two conversational turns. Seitz and Stewart include in their analysis expansions which occur "within the mother's three immediately subsequent utterances" (1975: 765), while Newport's (1977) various kinds of 'imitation' may follow the relevant child utterance by as many as, but no more than, ten utterances by any speaker.

Clearly there is great disparity here, and no small degree of arbitrariness. This arises largely from the various coding categories used having no single warranted basis of derivation, rooted in an analysis of the interactional work accomplished by each of these objects in its particular sequential location. Instead, categorisations are applied in an apparently ad hoc fashion to the data, with an arbitrary mixing up of structural and interactional criteria. The very identification of a class of objects called expansions, a category of reproduction defined in terms of its structural relationship with its original (the prior child utterance), appears to make a bid for the saliency of purely structural distinctions. It may be, however, that a major determining factor in whether an adult's reproduction of a child's utterance turns out to be an expansion or a straight, unexpanded repetition, is simply the grammatical completeness of the child's original utterance. It is also worth noting that these structural distinctions are largely restricted to lexical and syntactic spheres: the phonetic relationships between original and reproduction are largely ignored. One exception is a study by Snow et al. (1976), who suggest that straight repetitions can be regarded as 'phonological expansions', since a repetition of a phonetically deviant child production will typically be produced as "a

correct phonological model" (1976: 11). However, the fine details of the phonetic relationship between child and adult versions are not examined. Nor is consideration given to the sequential context in which these objects occur, or to the nature of the child production which is reproduced. Without recourse to such considerations, any categorisation system applied to the adult's speech is bound to result in a distorted and incomplete representation of the data under investigation.

The limitations imposed by this kind of approach are highlighted by the in-depth interactional analysis of the data presented in later chapters of this study, which reveals that many kinds of interactional work may be accomplished by an adult reproduction of a child's prior utterance. Reproduction may, for example, initiate repair by inviting some form of self-correction from the child. It may accomplish correction, or affirm the appropriacy of a prior utterance, or offer a candidate hearing of it; it may display resolution of a clarification issue. These various kinds of work will be accomplished in different sequential positions, and with reproductions which bear different formal relationships with their priors. Some forms of correction, for instance, as will be outlined in Chapter Five, are typically accomplished with a turn which reproduces the child's utterance and yet displays some kind of contrastivity with it. This may mean a repetition of lexical content with marked differences in prosodic shape. Affirmation, by contrast, is often accomplished with a repetition which avoids phonetic contrastivity. Clearly, a coding category of *repetition* is too broad to be of any real use, and one which is subdivided along purely structural lines, on the basis of the formal relationship between the redoing and its prior, such as Newport's (1977) 'exact', 'exact plus', 'partial' and 'partial plus' 'imitations', fails to take into account the interactional significance of these features. Why should we assume that these structural distinctions are significant, if no recourse is made to the way in which the utterances are dealt with by the participants themselves in the particular position in sequence in which they occur? Indeed, to focus on structural phenomena may be to OBSCURE the interactional significance of particular features. Langford (1985), for example, suggests that the

high frequency of repetitions and high pitch in adults' speech to children may simply reflect the fact that clarification requests are a common action taken in this kind of talk. Only on the basis of an analysis of the participants' own treatment of particular utterances may one arrive at an understanding of the interactional accomplishment of a turn at talk. One may then pursue the formal, linguistic features associated with such accomplishments, to arrive at an understanding of the linguistic exponents of particular actions. This is the approach which is to be taken in this study.

This subsection has considered some of the features which have been identified as characteristic of child directed speech and, using adult reproductions of children's utterances (repetitions and expansions) as an example, has illustrated some flaws in the means by which these features have been arrived at, which seriously weaken the gains which have been made by this line of research. The major concerns of this research tradition, however, have been less to describe in detail the features of child directed speech, than to establish its effects on children's language development. In the following subsection, therefore, I shall turn to a consideration of the functions or effects which have been associated with the language addressed to young children.

1.3.ii Functions Of Child Directed Speech

Early descriptions of 'baby talk' (e.g. Ferguson 1964) were concerned merely to describe this particular speech register and to consider whether it may be a universal phenomenon. At this stage, little consideration was given to the effects which the use of such a speech style may have on language development. Later, largely in response to Chomsky's 'innateness hypothesis', research into child directed speech was concerned specifically with investigating the environment in which language development takes place. In particular, it was postulated that the 'modifications' observable in adults' speech when interacting with young children might be directly related to the level of the child's linguistic development. It was felt that adults may display sensitivity to the child's linguistic capabilities throughout the process of

acquisition by 'fine-tuning' (e.g. Cross 1975) their own speech to the child's current level of achievement.

From this position, researchers moved to speculate that, not only was child directed speech adjusted to the requirements of the language learning child, but that its features could be regarded as causally related to the child's linguistic development - that adults were providing, in their ordinary talk, a series of language lessons for the benefit of the child. It is this suggestion which has supplied the main impetus behind later research into child directed speech. This belief that children benefit linguistically from the particular style of speech in which adults address them has been dubbed the 'motherese hypothesis', and has been expressed (Gleitman et al. 1984: 45) as proposing that "SPECIAL properties of caretaker speech play a causal role in acquisition" (original emphasis).

This view, while widely held, has not been without dissenters. Newport et al. (1977: 112) account for the commonly observed features of child directed speech as being due to the exigencies of sustaining communication with a non-competent speaker, rather than arising from any didactic motive on the part of the adult:

the properties of Motherese derive largely from the fact that the mother wants her child to do as he is told right now, and very little from the fact that she wants him to become a fluent speaker in the future.

However, there is an important distinction between the claim that adults are engaged in intentional linguistic training with children, and the claim that the style of speech which they use may facilitate language acquisition. This distinction becomes blurred in the development of Newport et al.'s argument (1977: 126):

three special characteristics of Motherese (brevity, well-formedness and intelligibility) arise for the purpose of here-and-now communication with a limited and inattentive listener, and cannot be described in terms of a language-instruction motive; this begins to suggest that they may not serve a language-learning purpose.

It is important to recognise that features of an adult's speech to a child, or of the interaction between child and adult, may be helpful to the child in the development of linguistic skills, quite regardless of the intentions or even the awareness of the adult in this regard. This view is taken, for example, by Furrow et al. (1979: 440):

It is apparent then that mothers adjust their speech to children in ways which facilitate growth. We do not mean to imply that mothers have any intent to teach language when using their special code, but we do suggest that, even though they may use it to serve other functions such as effective communication, motherese is an effective teaching language.

Most studies engaged with the 'motherese' debate have indeed assumed that, while adults are probably not intentionally setting out to teach linguistic skills to children, the speech which they typically use is nonetheless "an effective teaching language", and researchers have therefore set out to identify its didactic properties. However, just as the features identified as characteristic of child directed speech have been (as was seen in the previous subsection) rather arbitrarily derived, so the functions attributed to them have tended to be rather vague, and have not been warranted by a detailed observation of the behaviour of the participants in the interaction. To illustrate this I shall again use the example of expansions.

Expansions

A number of functions have been assigned to expansions in child directed speech. One line of thought views them as a form of correction, and links them specifically to the ungrammaticality of children's utterances. For Moerck (1974: 109), expansions are a kind of "corrective feedback" which occurs "after an incomplete or incorrect statement" by the child; and for Seitz and Stewart (1975: 765) one function of expansions is to "correct the grammar" of the child's utterances. Whitehurst and Novak (1973:333) state,

In expansion, parents correct a child's incomplete or ungrammatical utterances by following these utterances with a model of correct usage. The child is often observed to imitate the modeled correction.

This observation of a next action on the part of the child is very important in arriving at an understanding of how these utterances are really functioning, and by drawing attention to it Whitehurst and Novak point to considerations largely ignored elsewhere in this literature. However, it is not clear from the brief observation they make here whether or not these adult turns are designed in such a way as to INVITE imitation and self-repair by the child. If they are, they are accomplishing a particular kind of interactional work which may well be highly significant to a characterisation of the didactic properties of the interaction. The accomplishment of this kind of work can only be established by undertaking a close analysis of the interactional sequences in which these turns occur.

A second function commonly claimed for expansions is that they serve as a check on the adult's understanding of what the child has said. Brown and Bellugi (1964: 12), for example, claim:

From the mother's point of view an expansion is a kind of communication check; it says in effect: 'Is this what you mean?'

A similar view is taken by McNeill (1966) and by Cross (1977). And a related notion is that these utterances somehow 'interpret' a child's utterance. For Nelson (1973:86) expansions are associated with "relatively complex statements that need further interpretation", while Ryan (1974: 199) sees expansions as being "primarily interpretive of the child's utterance, delimiting its meaning more precisely, rather than corrective". Taking a similar view, Seitz and Stewart (1975: 765) suggest that expansions "make the child's utterance more explicit in meaning".

Here is an example of the vagueness with which some of these functions are described. Observations of this kind beg the question of just WHO it is that expansions make the child's utterances more explicit for. Are they, for instance, aids to the adult's understanding (the kind of understanding check mentioned by Brown and Bellugi (1964)), or do they make explicit to the CHILD the meaning which is being taken from the utterance? Dore (1979: 344), for example, suggests that when adults reproduce children's utterances they

display FOR THE INFANT how others interpret the intention motivating the choice of words on any particular occasion
(my emphasis).

Or do they, as a third possibility, make the child's meaning more explicit for some third party? Newport (1977) points out that expansion-counts in observational studies of child directed speech may yield particularly high readings if expansions or translations uttered for the benefit of the experimenter are taken into account. It may be that one particular circumstance in which adults frequently reproduce children's utterances is when another adult is present. Wells (1980), for example, found that the presence of a stranger was the only criterion which effected a frequent use of expansions in his naturalistic data.

It seems clear that a feature like expansion may be performing a whole host of interactional functions, and that a more detailed analysis is required if the intricacies of these different kinds of work are to be teased out. For instance, it is important to know whether the expansion or other kind of reproduction is something which invites or receives a response on the part of the child, and what kind of response that might be. It is equally important to know what kind of sequential position an expansion or repetition occupies, and whether only certain kinds of child utterances (in terms of THEIR sequential position and THEIR design) are met with this kind of response from the adult. If an adult's reproduction of a child's utterance is to be viewed as an understanding check, is it built as a question which puts the onus for clarification onto the child? If

so, how is this achieved in its design? Or is it instead built as a candidate interpretation which is simply offered up, and which the child may be free to contradict if it does not tally with the child's own understanding of the talk? Clearly, the interactional work accomplished by adult versions of child utterances is manifold and complex, and requires careful analysis. This analysis must take account of the details of the interactional context of each occurrence of the phenomenon, rather than assuming that a bunch of formally similar objects are a functionally cohesive set.

In addition, the linguistic exponents of these different interactional functions deserve detailed attention. Slobin (1968) makes a distinction between two classes of expansion in his data, on the grounds of intonational contour. He regards expansions with "declarative intonation" to function as confirmations, while those with "rising intonation" he takes to be communication checks. The prosodic distinctions made here are very gross and would merit much more detailed examination, but recognition is nonetheless given to the fact that prosodic features may play a part in the functional differentiation of otherwise formally similar objects. In the rest of the literature, little regard is paid to the phonetic construction of these utterances, and expansions and other kinds of reproduction are defined in lexical and syntactic terms. One of the concerns of this study is to give consideration to the phonetic, and particularly prosodic, exponents of the interactional objects which are identified in the data under consideration.

This section so far has given brief indication to the intellectual setting in which research into child directed speech has been carried out, and has outlined some of the formal features identified as characteristic of that speech, and some of the functions and effects claimed for those features. The following subsection will be concerned more precisely with the ways in which these two aspects, form and function, have been related, through giving critical consideration to the methodologies which have been employed by studies attempting to test the effects of child directed speech on the child's linguistic development.

1.3.iii Testing The Effects Of Child Directed Speech

Studies which have been concerned to ascertain the extent to which certain features of the language spoken to children may be of assistance in the process of the child's language acquisition have generally taken one of two approaches. Some have employed an experimental methodology, by exposing the child artificially to certain forms of language and then measuring some aspect of the child's language growth. Some examples which involve repetition are Cazden (1965), Feldman (1971), Malouf and Dodd (1972), Nelson et al. (1973), Nelson (1977) and Hovell et al. (1978). Others have rejected the artificiality of an experimental setting, and have instead made naturalistic observation of the adult's speech to the child, while employing similar measures of the child's language growth (e.g. Moerck 1974, 1975, Seitz and Stewart 1975, Snow et al. 1976, Newport 1977, Newport et al. 1977, Cross 1977, 1978, Barnes et al. 1983, Hoff-Ginsberg 1985, Richards 1990). Here I will give brief consideration in turn to each of these two approaches, pointing to some of the assumptions which lie behind them, and some of the problems faced by each.

Experimental studies

Experimental studies in this area can be broadly divided into those which measure the effects of particular, controlled 'inputs' on the child's general rate of language development, and those which measure the effects observable on specific areas of acquisition. Those which have tested for the effect of expansions on general rate of language development, as measured by a variety of language performance scores obtained before and after a treatment of extensive exposure to expansions, have produced mixed results. Cazden (1965), for example, found that a group of two and a half year old children systematically exposed to expansions showed slightly higher linguistic performance than a group who had received no treatment; but that a third group who received no expansions, but whose utterances were systematically met with a response which extended the ideas expressed within them, performed far better.

Brown, Cazden and Bellugi-Klima (1969) explain this finding by claiming that the use of expansions is necessarily restrictive and limiting in its scope for the child to develop new ideas and new verbal forms. However, when Feldman (1971) replicated Cazden's experiment, no significant results were produced.

Other experimental studies, rather than measuring general rate of language development, have focussed attention on specific areas. Malouf and Dodd (1972), in an experiment involving six and seven year olds, found that conditions in which a child's utterance was expanded, and in which the child was able to imitate a model, were both more favourable to the child's acquisition of an artificial rule of adjective ordering, than was a condition where the child simply received a model. Hovell et al. (1978) found the use of expansions more effective than the use of models in teaching four new adjectives to one to four year olds. And Nelson (1977) found that intervention treatment involving the use of expansions could aid specific areas of language acquisition. One group of children was exposed to expansions framed as questions, and another group received expansions that involved new verb forms. Over the test period the question group improved its performance on questions, and the verb group improved its performance on verbs, but not vice versa. Nelson's claim, then, is that the use of expansions can be selectively facilitative of particular areas of language development.

The major attraction in taking an experimental approach to this kind of study obviously lies in the degree of control which it allows the investigator to exert over the language which the child is exposed to. This very control, however, also leads to its greatest drawback, since there is no guarantee that controlled data simulates in any way the real language learning situation in which children find themselves. A first query raised by a consideration of these studies is whether the intervention or 'treatment' given is either frequent or extensive enough to override the influence of other environments in which the child spends a greater proportion of time. In other words, there is a query over

whether the experimental situation is controlled ENOUGH. A second, and perhaps more serious consideration, is that any degree of experimenter control necessarily distances the situation being studied from the kind of situation which young children naturally find themselves in, and the question is raised as to whether the nature of the experimental intervention bears any relation to the kind of language situations which young children are routinely exposed to. If it does not, then the results of such studies can tell us little about the routine language development of children, whatever they may tell us about the language development of children under certain experimental conditions. For instance, McNeill (1970) has pointed out that with the unnaturally increased number of expansions offered to the child in this kind of experimental situation, many child utterances will be inappropriately expanded and confusion for the child will be the result. And there is the further problem that even if some kind of improvement is measurable in the child's language ability over the test period, there are no firm grounds for relating this improvement causally to the treatment. In short, since the broad research question being addressed here concerns the language development of ordinary children interacting normally with their caretakers, an experimental approach is bound to be of limited value, since controlled experiments can tell us very little about the processes which are routinely at work in children's everyday interactions with those around them.

Observational studies

It is because of these pitfalls associated with an experimental approach that many researchers have preferred to work in a more naturalistic environment, by observing the speech which adults employ when addressing children in a natural (or quasi-natural) setting. Typically, these studies have coded on various parameters the speech of the child's caretaker when interacting with the child, and have derived a 'growth score' for the child's rate of linguistic development, usually by subtracting a performance score at time 1 from a performance score at time 2. Correlations have then been measured

between these various parameters of the adult's speech and the rate of the child's language development.

These observational studies, like the experimental ones considered above, have differed in their focus with regard to the child speech variables being examined. Most have been concerned with the child's general rate of language development, while some, like Richards (1990), have focussed on the development of specific linguistic structures - in his case auxiliary and copula verbs. Those which have opted to look at general rate of linguistic development have done so in various ways. The standard approach (e.g. Newport et al. 1977, Barnes et al. 1983) is to derive a language performance score for the child at two (or more) points a few months apart, and from comparison of these to compute a language growth score. Performance scores are usually derived from a combination of measures relating to the syntactic complexity of the child's speech (e.g. MLU, mean noun phrase frequency and length, mean verb phrase frequency and length, inflection of noun phrases and auxiliary structure (Newport et al. 1977)). However, some researchers have used more indirect means to relate their findings to rate of language acquisition. Cross (1977), for example, took as her subjects sixteen children who (on a number of tests) showed signs of developing language particularly rapidly, and dispensed with the procedure of computing growth scores over time. In a further study (Cross 1978), she paired children matching on linguistic level but differing in age. The younger of each pair was thus considered 'accelerated' in comparison with the older child, and was assigned to an 'accelerated group'; the older to a 'normal group'. Comparisons were then drawn between these two groups of children. And Snow et al. (1976) took an even more indirect (and highly questionable) approach to introducing the dimension of rate of child language development into their study, by simply comparing the language spoken to Dutch children in three different social classes. They did this on the grounds that comparing the speech of middle class mothers with that of working class mothers amounted to "comparing the mothers of children who can be expected to be good language learners with the mothers of children

who are more likely to be poor language learners" (Snow et al. 1976: 3). Snow et al. provide no warrant for proceeding on the basis of such an assumption.

With regard to the coding of adult speech, these studies have tended to choose similar variables for investigation, mostly borrowing from earlier studies those features which have been suggested to be facilitative of language acquisition. An example is the 62 feature coding system used by Cross (1977), divided into 'discourse features' (expansions, repetitions etc.), 'referential characteristics' (whether the talk is directed to the here-and-now or not), 'conversational style' (how much the adult speaks) and 'syntactic features' (complexity, intelligibility, sentence type). These features are then individually correlated with the various measures of the child's language growth, in the search for significant, positive correlations. The features which have correlated positively have varied from study to study, but have nonetheless been taken by most researchers to lend support to the motherese hypothesis - as indicating specific ways in which the input facilitates language acquisition. A more cautious interpretation, however, is made by Newport et al. (1977) who stress the many 'non-effects' as well as the 'effects' of child directed speech evidenced by their study, and suggest that any assistance awarded to the child by the 'input' language is limited to certain language-specific aspects of surface syntax.

This kind of observational study clearly avoids some of the major problems encountered by the experimental approach discussed earlier. However, it by no means overcomes all of them, and it carries others of its own. To begin with, this kind of approach relies on the calculation of positive correlations. As Newport et al. (1977) point out, a positive correlation between a particular feature of adult speech (say, frequency of expansions) and a particular measure of child linguistic development (such as vocabulary growth), may be explained in terms of the child's speech having an effect on the adult's speech. Alternatively, it may reflect the fact that the rate of a child's linguistic development over a given time span varies according to the level of

development at the onset of that time span, since language learning curves are not linear but accelerated in the early stages (Newport et al. 1977:119). A third possibility, of course, is happenstance. In short, the calculation of positive correlations between two features provide no guarantee of a relation of causality holding between those features - and yet it is just such a relation which is being assumed in studies of this kind.

A second limitation of this kind of study lies in the selection of variables for measuring the child's linguistic growth. Even if it can be assumed that a computation of two performance scores over time will result in an adequate measurement of growth rate, it is nonetheless clear from the variables selected in most of these studies that the child is being measured almost solely in terms of syntactic development. These studies therefore largely ignore any potential benefits which particular features of child directed speech may offer in the areas of phonetics, vocabulary development¹ or discourse skill.²

The most serious weakness of studies in this tradition, however, and one which this study attempts directly to address, lies at the level of the coding of the adult speech. A fundamental problem associated with any approach to the study of interaction which isolates one speaker's contribution from the conversation and attempts to measure or code it in any way, is that it inevitably results in a serious distortion in its representation of the structure and nature of talk. Barnes et al. (1983: 82), in the concluding remarks to their (correlational) study, pertinently observe that "if the conversation that the child experiences is facilitative of his or her further development, it is so as a result of interaction to which both child and adult contribute". Talk is an interactional phenomenon which is COLLABORATIVELY constructed by its participants as it progresses. Each contribution has a particular sequential placement within that progression, and gains its significance by virtue of that sequential placement - by what came before it and

¹Cross (1977) includes a measure of expressive vocabulary as one of her child variables.

²One of the variables employed by Barnes et al. (1983) is a measure of the child's 'pragmatic range', based on the number of 'speech act functions' used.

also by what comes after it. That is, turns at talk accomplish the particular work they do (gain significance as particular interactional objects), not only by virtue of their content or design, but also - and crucially - by virtue of their precise positioning within a local sequential context. Coding an adult's contributions to a child-adult conversation in terms of their structural linguistic properties results in the stripping away of one half of a conversational exchange, and divorces conversational objects from their sequential environment. To do this is to lose all real sense of how talk works.

Some issues relating to the choice of adult speech variables in this kind of study have already been considered with regard to the selection of expansions and repetitions in subsection 1.3.i. above. Variables such as well-formedness and syntactic simplicity seem to have been selected with an a priori notion of what 'motherese' is, based on what can be assumed to be facilitative of language development. Indeed, Cross (1978:203) states that "each feature [of adult speech] was selected on the grounds that it may have influenced the rate at which the child was acquiring language structure". These studies, then, start from certain assumptions about the way in which adults converse with children. There has also been a confusion of structural and interactional features in the coding schemes used, and these features have been given overlapping and oddly derived definitions. This problem in particular was illustrated with respect to expansions and repetitions in subsection 1.3.i.. It is interesting to note that there is a tendency across these studies for those variables labelled 'discourse' features to correlate positively more consistently with aspects of the child's linguistic growth than variables relating to syntactic complexity (e.g. Cross 1977, Cross 1978, Hoff-Ginsberg 1985). However, as was indicated earlier, such discourse features tend to be structurally rather than functionally defined, and certainly not to be sensitive to the interactional work accomplished by various linguistic objects. A further point is that all of the adult features selected are coded for their FREQUENCY. Even if certain features of the speech which adults address to children can be pinpointed as being (at least

potentially) facilitative of language development, there can be no guarantee that their frequency of occurrence in an interchange equates with their saliency for the child.

There are thus many problems associated with the traditional ways in which researchers have addressed the relationship between the child's linguistic environment and the progress of language acquisition. In this section so far I have considered some difficulties posed by the description of child directed speech, by the assigning of functions to its features, and by traditional methods (both experimental and observational) of assessing its effectiveness. These difficulties were seen to arise from a failure to take on board the interactional nature of the talk in which young children are involved. What is suggested by this critique is that the notion of the child's linguistic environment needs to be conceived rather differently. However, before addressing the issue of how this may be done, I shall briefly consider a current concern in child language research which is once more focussing researchers' attention on the issues raised by the 'motherese' debate.

1.3.iv Learnability And Negative Evidence

There is a particular strand of ongoing research, which has taken an interest in the language spoken to children and its effects on language development, and which deserves separate attention here. It is concerned with the extent to which children receive, in the language they hear addressed to them, sufficient corrective information relating to their own ungrammatical productions to construct an adequate grammar of the language which they are learning.

This research endeavour takes as its basis the report presented by Brown and Hanlon (1970) that parents when interacting with their children do not explicitly disapprove of their children's syntactic errors. That is, that explicit approval and disapproval observed in the parents' speech (responses to children of the form *yes, that's right, very good*, and *no, that's not right, that's wrong*) are not contingent on the well-

formedness of the children's utterances. Instead Brown and Hanlon claim that approval and disapproval in adult speech is directed towards the truth value of the child's contributions rather than to its syntactic correctness. This observation has been widely taken on board, and incorporated into 'learnability' models of language acquisition (e.g. Wexler and Culicover 1980, Pinker 1984). These models, which focus on the logical problem of language learning, have thus been developed on the basis of the hypothesis that the child manages to deduce a correct grammar of the language without the aid of 'negative evidence' - that is, without the benefit of corrective feedback to any inaccurate hypothesis which the child may devise. This 'no negative evidence' feature of the child's learning environment has been seen to be particularly significant in the area of overgeneralisation of linguistic rules. Without the aid of negative information, the problems facing the child in rectifying an overgeneralised linguistic rule are seen to be considerable. Brown and Hanlon's observation has thus given rise to a debate which has been very much alive throughout the 1980s. A brief mention of three studies in particular, addressed to this problem, will illustrate some of the issues involved.

Hirsh-Pasek et al. (1984) widened the scope of what might be considered to constitute negative evidence for the child, by looking at the occurrence of adult repetitions of children's utterances. They found that adults were more likely to repeat a child's utterances when those child utterances were ill-formed. They suggested, then, that there may be more subtle ways than the explicit statements and markers of approval and disapproval mentioned by Brown and Hanlon, by which adults do indeed indicate their sensitivity to the syntactic correctness of children's utterances. Demetras et al. (1986) took this line of thought further by drawing a distinction between 'explicit' and 'implicit' feedback to language learners, as well as considering both 'adjacent' and 'non-adjacent' feedback. They found that the occurrence of explicit responses on the part of the adult (*yes, that's right, no, that's not right*) conformed to the Brown and Hanlon pattern: mothers were more sensitive, in their production of such responses, to

the truth value of the child's contributions than to their syntactic correctness. However, they found that certain adult turns which they considered to constitute implicit feedback corresponded with syntactic well-formedness. Implicit approval was taken to be inherent in the adult's moving on to a new topic, while repetitions and clarification questions were seen to be instances of implicit disapproval.

Both of these studies, then, have advocated a more careful consideration of the notion of negative evidence, and have suggested that there may be more subtle ways in which a child is given indication that a grammatical error has occurred, than explicit statements of approval and disapproval. The debate has continued, and has received something of a counterbalance, with the study of Morgan and Travis (1989) which focussed on parental responses to two particular kinds of syntactic error in children - inflectional over-regularisation and WH-question auxiliary-verb omission. While Morgan and Travis suggest that certain response types on the part of the adult may be seen as corrective (for example, expansions, partial imitations, clarification questions and confirmation questions), they argue that these responses are neither frequent enough relative to the incidence of a type of error, nor sufficiently recognisable to the child, nor adequately timed in relation to the progress of the child's linguistic development, to be considered systematically informative. They conclude:

Although negative feedback may conceivably facilitate the acquisition of particular features of syntax on occasion, it appears quite justifiable to continue the construction of general models of language learning incorporating the assumption that language input does not include negative information.
(Morgan and Travis 1989: 551)

Some interesting points arise from the line of work represented by these three studies, and there is clearly a move towards taking a more careful look at features of interaction in the recognition that 'negative evidence' can be embodied in a more subtle range of adult activities than outright expressions of disapproval such as *no that's not right*. In making this claim, Hirsh-Pasek et al. make a promising move in the direction of a

closer analysis of the details of interaction. Demetras et al. go further with the observation that the category of repetition, as employed by Hirsh-Pasek et al., is too broad since, as they rightly point out, "Repetitions of a preceding speaker's utterance can be used for a variety of discourse functions". However, the distinctions they make in their coding of repetition are formal not functional ones ('exact', 'contracted', 'expanded', and 'extended'). Such a subcategorisation therefore goes no further than Hirsh-Pasek et al.'s global category as regards sensitivity to the function served or interactional work accomplished by these repetitions.

This point is implicitly considered by Morgan and Travis who question the validity of the formal distinction they themselves make between two response types - 'expansion' and 'imitation'. They suggest that their finding that expansions followed ungrammatical child utterances and imitations followed grammatical ones is unsurprising given the grammaticality of adult speech. That is, a repetition of an ungrammatical utterance (in this case a WH-question omitting the auxiliary - a 'telegraphic' utterance) will formally be an expansion. Without explicitly stating the case, Morgan and Travis are getting at a very important point here. They are questioning the assumption that formal distinctions will have interactional salience. They also make the important (but often neglected) observation that a linguistic form may have a multiplicity of interactional functions. As an example, they instance their own category of 'clarification questions' - a class which encompasses a wide array of interactional objects which may, for example, address a number of different difficulties in a prior utterance in addition to ungrammaticality, and which may vary considerably with regard to the degree of specificity with which they locate that difficulty. This is an extremely important point, which would seem to highlight a fundamental weakness of the practice of coding by form when one is dealing with interactional data. However, the point made from it here is a rather different one. Morgan and Travis state,

Simply put, the problem is that the more functions a given response type takes on, the more difficult it will be for the child to discern those

occasions on which the response is intended to fulfill its syntax-correcting function.
(Morgan and Travis 1989: 548)

That is, they use this observation, not to point to serious problems inherent in the use of such a coding system, but to question whether clarification questions can be recognised by the child as supplying corrective information, since they may also be performing other kinds of interactional work. Of course, one of the skills to be learned by the child is the ability to distinguish the different kinds of work being accomplished by a feature like a clarification question in talk. And it may well be that these different kinds of work are in part distinguished by factors such as sequential position, and by linguistic details such as their prosodic shape. By framing the problem faced by the child in the particular way that they do, Morgan and Travis are assuming that the child, when engaged in communicative talk with an adult, is operating within the same restricted, formally (and essentially syntactically) derived framework of categorisations which forms the basis of their own taxonomy of the data. This is one of the particularly dangerous places to which coding of this kind may lead.

These studies, then, take important steps in the direction of recognising the need for a closer analysis of the details of linguistic interaction, and for caution in the use of gross coding categories distinguished on formal grounds for making claims about interactional function. But they do not, in my view, go far enough. They are fundamentally constrained by an approach which relies on the coding of linguistic features, which is not supported by an in-depth analysis of the structure of the talk at hand. Such an analysis could provide a warranted basis for categorisation on the grounds of the interactional work accomplished by particular linguistic objects, as evidenced by the actions of the participants in the interaction. They are also constrained by a view of language acquisition as an essentially logical problem, involving the child in the deduction of an abstract formal (i.e. syntactic) grammar. This view is embodied in the very notion of 'feedback' which reflects a conception of the acquisition process

rather similar to that suggested by the use of 'input', a term which is still being used in these studies. The notion of feedback does take a step away from the assumption, inherent in earlier approaches, that an adult's contributions to an exchange can be stripped away from the child's contributions, lumped together, and described as the child's input. It at least recognises that individual adult turns in a child-adult conversation are directed or addressed to individual (prior) child turns, in place of the rather crude view which simply recognises all adult speech in the conversation as child-directed. But it is still far from the view of social interaction (taken in this study) in which turns at talk are seen to be contingently built upon one another. For instance, Demetras et al. (1986: 277) pose as one of the questions to be addressed in their research the following:

If one considers both implicit and explicit feedback, and non-adjacent as well as adjacent feedback, how much feedback is available in speech to young children?

The answer is that young children receive feedback on all of their utterances, just as adults receive feedback on all of THEIR utterances, which may indicate how that initial feedback has been received by the child, and so on. That is, talk is collaboratively constructed in such a way that participants display for one another, most fundamentally in next turn position, an understanding of how a prior turn has been received and what its import has been taken to be, and that by this continual process throughout the progress of talk, intersubjective understandings are reached. This is why the coding of adult utterances without a prior in-depth analysis of each utterance in its own sequential position is bound to result in a distorted picture of how talk works. And if one is concerned with the function of linguistic objects in talk, as these studies are, then an understanding of how talk works is fundamental. My argument is not that coding *per se* is a misguided activity, but that if one is to code, then one must take the trouble to know exactly WHAT one is coding. To do this, and to attempt to gain insight into the ways in which certain features of talk may be functioning for the talk's participants, it is necessary to take a participant's eye view of those features. This will involve the

researcher in an extensive and thorough analysis of the interactional data at hand. In this study, therefore, coding is rejected in favour of presenting a detailed, in-depth interactional data analysis.

1.3.v Concluding Remarks

The debate surrounding the extent to which a young child's linguistic environment plays a part in the development of linguistic skills is clearly a live one. If we are to understand the process through which a child comes to learn language we must look, not just to the psychological processing abilities of the child, or to the 'learnability' of abstract linguistic structures, but also to the talk which takes place between the child and other speakers, through and within which the development of language skills (as indeed many other kinds of development) occurs. There can be little doubt that the social interaction in which the child participates can ill afford to be ignored in child language research. It seems clear, too, that within that social interaction we will find features which have an important bearing on the course of the child's linguistic development. This conjecture has motivated most of the research to date on child directed speech, and it also drives (albeit in a different direction) the present study.

What is less clear, however, is just HOW that social interaction may be adequately studied in order to shed some light on the processes of language learning at work within it. The foregoing discussion of research undertaken in the field has highlighted some of the problems associated with the 'code and correlate' approach which has dominated work in the area. Indeed, it is apparent from reading this work that many of these pitfalls are acknowledged by researchers in the field, and that successive studies are to a large extent attempts to overcome, through the employment of more and more complex statistical procedures, recognised weaknesses in earlier investigations. However, the basic format of research has remained the same - as is evidenced by the study undertaken by Richards in this mould as recently as 1990.

The basic question, then, underlying this research enterprise - *How does the child's linguistic environment influence the development of linguistic skills?* - remains a valid and important one. However, in order to address it appropriately it seems necessary to construe the notion of the child's linguistic environment in a rather more sophisticated fashion than has hitherto been the case. That is, the structure of the interaction between adult and child, rather than individual or summed contributions to it, must somehow be handled. The question we are then faced with is, *What features of the interactions which routinely occur between child and adult may have some bearing on the child's linguistic development?*

One possibility which deserves serious attention is that, in the course of these interactions, adults may in various subtle (or even not so subtle) ways, be teaching language skills to young children. That is, there may be observable features of adult-child talk which displays that talk to be of a didactic nature, and to be concerned, not just with teaching the child about the world (which one must expect to find since it is through their talk with adults that young children are socialised), but specifically with teaching the child about the form of the language which is being used. This perspective would appear to offer a more promising way of readdressing what is fundamentally the same research question as that driving the studies into child directed speech discussed in this section, and it provides the impetus for the present study. The analysis presented in later chapters, then, will be directed towards uncovering the details of a didactic mode of talk in the conversations naturally-occurring between adults and young children, and towards identifying the extent to which such instructional talk is addressed to matters of linguistic form.

However, before it is possible to proceed to such a task, it is necessary to find a way of analysing, at an appropriate level of detail, the structure of the interactional talk which occurs between adult and child. In the following section I shall outline some reasons

for regarding the tradition of conversation analysis as carrying some important insights to offer such an enterprise.

1.4 CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

In this section, I shall indicate my reasons for believing that conversation analysis (CA), a research tradition arising out of ethnomethodological work in sociology, is able to provide researchers with the kind of grasp on interactional data which may result in a new and fruitful approach to some of the issues raised by the work discussed in the previous section, concerning the part played by the child's linguistic environment in the acquisition of language skills. It is not my intention here to trace the history of the CA tradition, or to outline the scope of the work which has been undertaken under its influence. There are now several published texts which present this information (e.g. Levinson 1983, Heritage 1984a, Heritage and Atkinson 1984, Heritage 1989, Wootton 1989, Drew 1990). Instead, the three subsections which follow will be directed to highlighting some of the principles and findings of the tradition which particularly lend themselves to the research question at hand; to considering some of the contributions already made to the field of adult-child interaction by CA work; and, finally, to substantiating a claim that CA, rather than being a primarily sociological enterprise, can be a productive means to what is essentially a LINGUISTIC analysis.

1.4.i Some Conversation Analytic Insights Into The Nature Of Talk-In-Interaction

A first claim which CA lays to our attention as a candidate method to be employed in the analysis of adult-child talk is that it is a research tradition which has always been concerned with naturally-occurring data, and with taking a strictly empirical and inductive approach to its analysis. In the previous section, some of the limitations of taking an experimental approach to tackling the problem of the linguistic influences which the child is exposed to were highlighted. Since our concern here is with the

routine interactions in which the developing child is involved, it is clear that controlled experiments would be of limited value. It should also be apparent from the discussion in the previous section that much research in the area to date has tended to take as given those features which are characteristic of child directed speech and hence likely to be facilitative of linguistic growth, without carrying out any detailed empirical investigation into these matters. CA researchers (who have traditionally focussed their attentions on the interactions occurring between adult peers) have, through their rejection of intuitive assumptions about the nature of talk-in-interaction, and through their careful attention to the fine details of interactants' behaviour, uncovered many unexpected (and sometimes counterintuitive) orderlinesses operating in talk, in such areas as, for example, incursion and overlap (e.g. Sacks et al. 1974, Jefferson 1986), conversational repair (e.g. Schegloff et al. 1977, Jefferson 1987) and the use of particles such as *oh* (e.g. Heritage 1984b, Local 1992a). It would seem that much could be gained from taking a similarly open-minded and careful look at adult-child interaction, in order to produce a fuller description of the facts than has hitherto been available. Quantitative data analysis, of the kind repeatedly undertaken in traditional studies into child directed speech, must, if it is to be of any real value, be preceded and informed by a detailed and thorough QUALITATIVE analysis. CA provides some delicate tools for just this kind of work.

But perhaps the most distinctive contribution which CA has to offer, by which it stands out from other approaches to the pragmatic analysis of talk such as speech act theory (Searle 1969) and discourse analysis (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975), lies in the procedures it employs for the classification of interactional objects. I have already indicated some of the inconsistencies and inaccuracies to which coding schemes of the kind used in traditional 'motherese' studies are susceptible. These problems stem from the categorisations used having no warranted basis, but rather drawing on the investigator's own intuitive sense of how objects class together. Now, any analysis of social action (such as talk) must employ particular recognition procedures, by which

units of action are identified and described. And it is important that these recognition procedures should be explicit. This point is made particularly effectively by Wootton (1989: 238-240), and in reiterating it here I am borrowing several of the terms of his argument. This explicitness is important, as Wootton points out, in order that analyses may be REPRODUCIBLE. Considering the studies into child directed speech discussed in the previous section, the reproducibility of the analyses they present is measured in terms of scores awarded for inter-coder reliability. However, there is a second sense of reproducibility which can be applied to analyses of social action, which, in Wootton's words,

relates to the fact that members of society are continually organising their conduct so as to have it identifiable by others, and that in the course of this they rely on the capacity of the communication system to reproduce forms of conduct from which systematic inferences can be drawn by other parties involved
(Wootton 1989: 239).

That is, an analysis which is reproducible in this second sense does not only make its system of identification explicit and thereby replicable by other researchers (reproducibility in the first sense). Beyond this, it attempts to uncover, and employ in its description of units of action, just those recognition procedures by which those actions are produced and interpreted by their agents. CA, unlike speech act theory or discourse analysis, is directed towards this second kind of reproducibility. In a CA approach, units of interactional behaviour are not identified and distinguished by an arbitrary system of taxonomy, but are warranted as ecologically valid by making recourse to the *normative* procedures by which the participants themselves interpret them.

One way in which these normative procedures may be uncovered is by recognising the *accountability* of particular actions (or the absence of particular actions) in an interactional exchange. For instance, an important and basic CA discovery has been to identify the existence of *adjacency pairs* in sequences of turns at talk (see Schegloff and

Sacks 1973). This concept relates to the observation that certain utterance types, such as questions, regularly project the occurrence of certain other utterance types (in this case answers) in a position following them. Now, this observation does not amount to a claim that questions are always followed by answers. Such a claim would patently be false. Nor does it represent a claim that questions are OFTEN, or IN THE MAJORITY OF CASES followed by answers. Such a claim would advance us little in our understanding of talk, since we would neither be able to predict when a question was or was not to be followed by an answer, nor gain any understanding into the principles by which the participants in talk made or interpreted such choices. Rather, the claim is that questions are NORMATIVELY followed by answers. This can be established by observing that, recurrently, the absence of an answer following a question is an *accountable* or *notable absence* (see Schegloff 1972), and is oriented to as such by the talk's participants. An example much cited in the literature is the following:

(Atkinson & Drew 1979:52)
A: Is there something bothering you or not?
(1.0)
A: Yes or no
(1.5)
A: Eh?
B: No

Here, A orients to the absence of an answer to the question posed in the first turn by (twice) reformulating that question, until an answer is forthcoming.

In the following example (again, much cited), the answer to A's question is not strictly 'adjacent' to it, but is separated from it by a second question-answer pair:

(Schegloff 1972:78)
A: Are you coming tonight?
B: Can I bring a guest?
A: Sure.
B: I'll be there.

In this case, question and answer (*Are you coming tonight?* - *I'll be there*) are separated by an insertion sequence (*Can I bring a guest?* - *Sure*), which consists of a further

question-answer pair, and which addresses the production of an answer to the original question by dealing with the recovery of relevant preliminary information. Once this information has been imparted, the original question receives its answer. Thus, while the answer to the original question is not immediately forthcoming in this sequence,

the entire sequence nonetheless proceeds under the continuously sustained expectation that A's first pair part will ultimately receive its looked-for second
(Heritage 1984a:251).

That is, on production of a question, an answer may be said to be EXPECTABLE, or *conditionally relevant*. In this case, that conditional relevance is seen to be sustained (collaboratively, by both participants) across the production of an insertion sequence of further talk.

Through this kind of uncovering of the normative procedures by means of which participants in talk structure and interpret their own actions and those of their co-participants, analysts may thus identify the *sequential implications* which certain actions carry - a sequential implication of the production of a question, for example, being that either an answer, or a complaint about - or account for - the non-production of an answer, or some other such utterance will, ultimately, be produced. In this way, CA concerns itself very much with the SEQUENTIAL properties of turns at talk. Important recognition is given to the fact that any action is in part identified by virtue of its location relative to other actions. That is, an utterance can be seen to accomplish a particular kind of interactional work not simply by virtue of its own design (for example the words it uses or the propositions it contains), but also - and crucially - by virtue of its precise placement within an immediate sequential context. So, for example, in the first extract cited above, A's third turn contains a single item *eh*, uttered with rising pitch (indicated by the employment of the question mark in the transcription). Such an item might be encountered in talk performing a number of kinds of interactional work. It might, for instance, in other positions, display a

difficulty with the hearing or comprehension of a prior utterance. The fact that it is here doing the work of soliciting a response to an earlier utterance in large part derives from its positioning relative to the utterances (and silences) which precede it. This may seem at first to be quite obvious an observation to make about the nature of conversation, and to be undeserving of particular attention. However, it is patently something which has not been taken fully on board by many researchers engaged in the analysis of interactional data. If it had been, analyses would not, like those discussed in the previous section, depend on coding schemes which attempt to classify and quantify features of an individual's contributions isolated from a conversational exchange.

A further important insight gained from this attention paid by CA researchers to the sequential properties of turns at talk is that speakers, when they take a turn, regularly display by the design of that turn a particular understanding or interpretation of the prior speaker's turn. Turns, that is, are designed to be appropriately fitted to the turns they follow. Because of this, the position of next turn in any sequence assumes particular significance. It is the place where a speaker may, if necessary, initiate repair on anything which is found to be problematic in the prior turn. And because speakers display in this way the particular understanding which they are taking from a prior turn, then next turn position to those displays is the place where a speaker may initiate repair on a problematic understanding thus displayed. In this way, participants in talk are continuously establishing, repairing and maintaining *intersubjective understandings* through the collaborative construction of their talk. This particular insight clearly offers a much more sophisticated conception of the influence of one speaker's talk on that of another than does, for example, the notion of *feedback* offered by learnability theory and discussed in section 1.3.iv. Once the import is grasped of this conception of the achievement of intersubjectivity in talk, it becomes apparent that the research question posed by Demetras et al. (1977:277) (see section 1.3.iv), concerning the extent to which feedback is available to young children, needs to be carefully rethought.

CA therefore offers a set of tools and a body of research findings, both of which promise to be invaluable to the task of uncovering fine details of the nature of talk which occurs between adults and children. This is necessarily a fundamental part of what this study sets out to do. But there are, in addition, further reasons why CA is particularly well adapted to the more specific demands of the particular enterprise at hand.

This study is concerned to explore the extent to which adult-child interaction may be characterised as being didactic in format and concerned with the teaching of - or, more precisely, the collaborative 'working on' - aspects of the child's developing language skills. One of its aims is therefore to arrive at some understanding of what it is to do or be engaged in didactic talk. For this, CA offers to be a promising starting point, since it is concerned precisely with "the interactional accomplishment of particular social activities" (Drew and Heritage 1992: 17). By uncovering the precise ways in which particular social actions are accomplished in talk, researchers may then address the ways in which sequences of these actions, constituting recognisable activity types, are also accomplished. While CA, in its early years, was traditionally limited to a concern with the 'mundane conversations' between adult peers, there has been a growing interest in using the insights thus gained into the workings of 'ordinary' talk as a starting point for exploring the ways in which talk in specialised settings accomplishes its particular activities by means of various modifications to the basic patterns found in more 'mundane' interactions. In this way, the talk of courtrooms (e.g. Atkinson and Drew 1979), medical encounters (e.g. Heath 1986) and news interviews (e.g. Greatbatch 1988) have been examined, and advances have been made in the understanding of what it is to do cross-examining, for instance, or to do consultancy or to do interviewing. There have also been investigations into the interactions which take place at school. McHoul (1978), for example, has investigated the formal nature of classroom talk with particular regard to the organisation of turn-taking, while Cuff and Hustler (1981) have studied the interactional negotiation surrounding story time in an

infant classroom. MacLure and French (1981) have compared the kinds of interaction which children engage in at home and at school (in terms of question sequences, correction and turn-taking procedures related to speakers' rights and number of participants), and suggest that most of what children will be faced with, interactionally, when they start school, they will already be familiar with from interactions at home. A study in a related area, to which reference will be made in Chapter Three, is that of Marlaire and Maynard (1990), who have outlined some of the ways in which standardised testing with children is interactionally managed. This particular focus of CA work, then, which is concerned with explicating the details of the interactional accomplishment of particular and specialised social activities, fits the approach particularly well to the task of identifying the constituent features of a didactic mode of talk.

And a further contribution which CA has to offer to an examination of the ways in which adults and children work on matters relating to the child's linguistic development within their talk, lies in an extensive body of CA work which has explicated some of the fine workings of conversational repair. It might be expected, for instance, that a principle feature of the kind of didactic interactions with language learners which are being conceived of here, might be a high incidence of corrections of children's linguistic mistakes. Clearly, an understanding of the ways in which repair is managed is going to be important to an investigation of the constitution of didacticism in talk. CA, more than any other approach to the analysis of spoken interaction, has, through many of the guiding principles outlined above, uncovered a number of details and orderlinesses in the machinery of interactional repair - "the self-righting mechanism for the organisation of language use in social interaction" (Schegloff et al. 1977: 381). Many of these findings will inform the analysis contained in subsequent chapters.

CA thus, in the first place, offers an approach to empirical analysis which may broaden our knowledge of the factual details of the ways in which interactions between adults

and children are conducted. To do this, it provides an ecologically valid means of description in its recognition that the means by which participants in talk display to one another their current understanding of the talk in progress, may also supply the investigator with a warranted procedure for the recognition and description of particular actions. In addition, CA is particularly well-suited to the more specific concerns of this study in being a sensitive tool for the uncovering of means by which a particular social activity like 'being didactic' or 'working on talk' is accomplished. In the following subsection I shall briefly consider some of the contributions which a CA approach has already made to the study of adult-child interaction.

The intention behind this subsection is neither to supply a comprehensive overview of all those studies touching on the field of child-adult talk which have employed or borrowed from a CA methodology, nor to discuss in detail those studies which are mentioned. It is, rather, simply to give brief indication to some of the ways in which conversation analytic insights have lent themselves to investigations in this area. Those works which have particularly influenced the analysis of this study will be dealt with at greater length in later chapters.

1.4.ii Some Contributions To The Study Of Child-Adult Talk

In comparison with the extensive body of investigations into the talk between adults, CA work in the field of adult-child interaction has been very limited. Nonetheless, such work is making important contributions to our understanding of the ways in which such talk is managed. Particularly important have been those studies which have focussed in detail on the design characteristics of particular kinds of turns, and have begun to tease out the different sequential implications of various design choices. Several studies have taken this approach to various kinds of remedial activity in adult-child talk. For instance, Wootton (1981a) has considered the use of address terms (such as *mummy*) by four year old children in their interactions with adults, and has found that these objects accomplish more than the traditional classification of them as

'attention-getting devices' would suggest. The positioning of address terms within a turn is crucial to distinguishing the different kinds of interactional work which they accomplish. Focussing in particular on remedial sequences following non-response by the adult to some turn of the child's, Wootton has shown that address terms in utterance-final position work to solicit a response from the recipient. Utterance-initial address terms, on the other hand, are associated with the work of reinitiation, and certain other accomplishments which do not rely, for an understanding of their import, on their recipient having monitored the prior child turn. The positioning of address terms within a turn is thus seen to be significant with regard to differential treatments by the child of an adult's non-response, and to have implications for the trajectory of the sequences of talk in which address terms occur.

In somewhat similar vein, Langford (1981) has focussed on another area of remedial activity in the talk between adults and children. By paying particular attention to the design of the turns and sequences in which they occur, he has uncovered a number of different forms which clarification requests addressed to children may take, and has demonstrated the ways in which these various formats both differentially treat the prior trouble which they address, and also have different implications for the sequences of talk which may follow them. The work of MacLure (1981), which pays attention to various "remedial and supportive strategies designed to overcome specific interactional problems in sustaining conversation with pre-competent interactants" (MacLure 1981: 279), extends our knowledge of the management of adult-child interaction in a number of areas. She has considered the strategies which adults use to sustain conversation with a child after the failure of a summons-answer sequence; at the ways in which adults 'formulate', or make sense of, children's prior utterances; and at different kinds of request sequences and question sequences initiated by adults. Wootton's (1990) study is an example of the approach which does not explicitly concern itself with remediation, but identifies variability in the design of the point initiations of children with Down's syndrome when looking at picture books with their caretakers. Here, the

design of the actions under observation extends to the gestural movements (the pointing) and the gaze behaviour of the children, as well as their vocalisations. Once again, fine differences in design are associated with different response expectations in the interaction.

The approach, in the limited number of studies in the field in which it has been employed, has clearly been a fruitful one. And two studies in particular can be pointed to which explicitly demonstrate specific advantages which CA holds over other approaches to child-adult talk. Wootton (1981b) has looked at the sequences of talk generated by requests made by four year olds, and has identified a *preference* for grantings and a *dispreference* for nongrantings in the adults' responses. This notion of preference is one which has informed much CA work. It refers, not to the psychological inclinations of individual speakers, but to the design specifics of particular, nonequivalent actions, such that preferred actions are seen to be accomplished in typically simple and direct ways, whereas dispreferred actions are couched in more complex designs which serve, in various ways, to minimise their occurrence. Wootton has found that 'lapsing' the observed preference pattern surrounding nongrantings in these sequences can be a means by which adults display an unwillingness to change their minds with regard to a particular child request. In this way, the organisation identified by Wootton allows children to distinguish between nongrantings which are more or less 'negotiable'. In presenting his findings, Wootton makes explicit the ways in which such an analysis uncovers orderlinesses which are obscured in a speech act approach to the analysis of requests, such as that presented by Labov and Fanshel (1977).

A second study which serves to highlight insensitivities in a non-CA approach to adult-child interaction - which is, indeed, addressed to such a task - is Dr w's (1981) response to a paper by Wells and Montgomery (1981), presenting a model of discourse analysis to account for data involving adults' corrections of children's mistakes. Since

a large part of Drew's paper deals with the notion of 'instructional talk', much of its content is particularly pertinent to the concerns of this study, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. What is important here is that, in reanalysing Wells and Montgomery's data using conversation analytic principles, Drew is able to point up the insensitivity of their model to some of the design features and interactional accomplishments of particular turns. Different means by which adults correct children's mistakes, for instance, can be seen to treat children's errors differently, and to lead to different interactional outcomes not distinguished by Wells and Montgomery's coding system. The argument presented by Drew is essentially the one which this chapter echoes - namely that,

coding aspects of utterances cannot capture much of the interactional and sequential work which a turn may be designed to achieve
(Drew 1981: 263).

This brief and selective illustration of some of the ways in which a CA methodology has been applied to the study of adult-child interaction has highlighted some of the advantages it holds over other approaches. It also suggests that much more is to be gained in the field from further studies in a similar mould, focussing on other areas of child-adult talk. Work of this kind, while it has been extremely informative, has really only begun to uncover the complex mechanisms at work in the talk which goes on between adults and children. In particular, most of the studies mentioned above deal with data from children considerably older than the children involved in this study. In selecting for analysis data from children between the ages of 1;6 and 2;3, then, this study is contributing to knowledge about the interactions which occur between adults and children at an age for which there exists little documented evidence of this kind.

This subsection and the previous one have presented a case that CA is a mode of analysis particularly well suited to the task of investigating adult-child interaction and to identifying those features within it which may be accomplishing didactic work. What remains to be substantiated is a claim that CA may be as much a means to a LINGUISTIC

analysis as it is to a more sociologically-oriented one. The following subsection is directed to that end.

1.4.iii Conversation Analysis As A Way Of Doing Linguistics

A criticism sometimes levelled at CA by linguists is that its concerns are essentially sociological ones - that it may indeed tell us a great deal about the accomplishment of social actions, and specifically about their accomplishment through the use of language, but that such efforts are of limited interest to the linguist for two reasons:- firstly, because the transcriptions and descriptions traditionally used by conversation analysts are not sufficiently detailed in linguistic terms for a linguist to know 'what is really going on' in the data; and secondly, because the accomplishment of social action is a matter which touches very little on the quest to discover and understand the structural properties of language, and therefore stands outside, or at best on the margins of, that which is the linguist's proper field of investigation. I shall address each of these two arguments in turn.

It is certainly true that most CA analyses proceed without attention to fine linguistic detail in some areas of the talk that they describe. The transcription system which is traditionally used by conversation analysts, while it represents considerable detail in some areas (such as speakers' breaths and the pauses between turns), tends to omit many phonetic details of the talk.³ It is also the case that the descriptions of turn design in these analyses have tended to hinge on matters of lexical choice and a rather superficial analysis of syntactic structure: once again, phonetic details have very often been passed over.

However, these facts do not reflect a limitation of the APPROACH, or of the importance of its findings to linguists. These characteristics of the CA literature simply reflect the concerns of researchers who, as sociologists with neither a primary interest nor a high

³This issue will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

level of training in linguistics or phonetics, have brought other requirements to the enterprise. It is certainly not the case that these features cannot be incorporated into a CA analysis, either in the systems used for the transcription of conversational data, or in consideration of the part they play in the accomplishment of particular actions. Kelly and Local (1989a) have demonstrated the use of a detailed impressionistic phonetic record in the transcription of conversational data, and in this and other work these researchers have exemplified the valuable contribution which can be made to our understanding of the workings of conversation by the employment of an analysis which is sensitive to fine phonetic details. For example, Kelly and Local (1989a) present some observations relating to the item *well* in data from an East London speaker, which demonstrate that close attention to the articulatory features of a class of unaccented *well*-tokens (those without on-syllable pitch movement) can distinguish a subclass of these which are also distinguished with regard to their sequential placement in talk. Specifically, a subclass of *well*-tokens with a particular configuration of articulatory features can be seen to be associated with the work of prefacing reported speech. Local (1992a) has conducted a similar analysis of some uses of the particle *oh* in talk. And these two researchers (and their co-workers) have looked in some detail at the ways in which speakers deploy phonetic resources to project the course of a turn, to hold the floor, and to display turn completion (e.g. French and Local 1983, Local 1992b, Local and Kelly 1986, Local, Kelly and Wells 1986, Local, Wells and Sebba 1985, Wells and Local 1993). Such work illustrates that it is perfectly possible (and indeed extremely profitable) to adopt the approach to analysis offered by CA while paying close attention to the fine phonetic details of the data at hand. Many of the concerns of this study, particularly those presented in Chapter Five, are with articulatory and prosodic features of the interaction. The characteristic focus of most CA studies, then, away from detailed linguistic (and particularly phonetic) aspects of the data, simply reflects the particular interests of those who have traditionally used the approach: it does not, by any means, set its bounds.

The second argument presented above is rather more serious. It suggests, not just that the tools with which conversation analysts operate are unworkable for linguists, but that the end result of such an operation is not one in which linguists have any serious interest. Such a view must, it seems to me, arise from unfamiliarity with what it is that conversation analysts are doing. Any linguistics which did not deal at some level with the FUNCTIONS of linguistic objects - which did not recognise that language is a system, or set of systems, employed by speakers for various social ends - would be a very odd kind of linguistics. And if one recognises that the functions of linguistic objects are important, then one needs a way of establishing, for any given linguistic object, what its function is. The unique contribution of the CA approach is that, unlike other pragmatic approaches, such as speech act theory, which have grown up within a linguistic tradition, it offers a warranted basis for assigning functions (perhaps better conceived as interactional or social accomplishments) to such objects. As was seen in subsection 1.4.i, these warrants are drawn from an attention to the ways in which participants themselves display their own interpretations and understandings of co-participants' talk. The methodology of CA thus provides an ideal starting point for an empirical linguistic investigation. Once social actions have been identified in this way, one can begin, by careful observation, to uncover the linguistic exponents of these particular actions, and thus to gain some understanding of the interactional accomplishments of various linguistic parameters. CA, then, can be a particularly sensitive way of doing linguistics.

The resistance of some linguists to the CA approach may arise in part from a tradition within linguistics which rejects conversational data as inappropriate for the true concerns of linguistic investigation. Conversation has long been pushed to the margins of linguistic concern, and its position there has only been confirmed in recent decades by the Chomskyan distinction made between matters relating to linguistic competence (the true pursuit of linguists) and those (including most of what goes on in conversational interaction) relating to linguistic performance. An important recognition

of CA research, however, is that ordinary conversation is the primary means by which language is used. Particularly pertinent to the concerns of this study is that it is also the medium through which children are socialised into the linguistic conventions of a society (Drew 1990:1). And it is precisely because interactional talk provides us with the warrants we need to make claims about the social accomplishments of linguistic objects, that conversation could be said to be the place where linguists should start their analysis. Perhaps some recognition of this indispensable resource offered by talk-in-interaction lay behind Firth's (1935) prediction, quoted in subsection 1.2.iii above, that it will be in the study of conversation that we will "find the key to a better understanding of what language really is and how it works" (Firth 1935: 32).

1.5 SUMMARY AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

1.5.i Summary

Linguistic investigations into the process of children's language development have, for the most part, paid insufficient heed to the interactional nature of the talk in which young children engage. Those studies which have concerned themselves with the linguistic environment in which language acquisition takes place, have focussed on the speech of adults, isolating from their sequential context certain features of adult utterances addressed to children. The discussion of this chapter has illustrated the limitations of such an approach: problems are encountered in the identification of features, in assigning functions to those features, and in testing their effects. The notion of *feedback*, encountered in discussions of the 'learnability' of language, has also been seen to be somewhat misconceived. It thus becomes apparent that what is needed is a refined conception of the linguistic environment in which children develop their language skills, which takes account of the collaboratively constructed interactions which routinely take place between adult and child.

Taking this step necessitates a rather different approach from that traditionally adopted by researchers into child directed speech. An appreciation of the complexities of interactional talk suggests that measuring features and testing for their 'effects' on the child's linguistic development is not going to be the most profitable way to proceed. However, what may be going on in adult-child conversations are 'language lessons' at a more local level and of a more subtle kind than those envisaged within traditional motherese research. What is suggested, then, is a rather different way of coming at the problem. By making a close interactional analysis of adult-child conversations, one may attempt to identify those features which construct the talk as having didactic concerns, and by which its participants enact work on the linguistic aspects of their talk.

In the later part of the chapter it was argued that conversation analysis is an approach to the empirical investigation of interactional talk which has many insights to offer this enterprise. In particular, it provides an ecologically warranted procedure for description and analysis, and offers the means to uncover the linguistic exponents of the accomplishment of a social activity such as 'working on talk'. Finally, it has been argued that this kind of approach, while slow to be taken up by linguists, nonetheless has much to offer by way of providing a warranted basis for a particularly valid kind of linguistic analysis.

1.5.ii Outline Of The Study

The specific aim of the data analysis presented in the later chapters of this study is to identify those features of adult-child interaction such as corrections, repetitions and affirmations, by which participants in the talk may be seen to be working on the child's language skills. A further aim is to arrive at some picture of how extensive such 'working on talk' is in the ordinary conversations in which young children routinely engage.

The analysis presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five is directed towards the first of these aims. It focusses on the spoken interaction which forms part of a specialised activity in which adults and children regularly participate - the labelling of pictures from picture books. This particular setting was chosen for analysis because a) it is a recurrent activity in the daily lives of many young children, b) it is explicitly didactic, and c) it is concerned specifically with tests and displays of the child's linguistic skills. It was felt, then, that a close analysis of the talk in this setting would provide a sound basis for an understanding of the constituent features of a particular activity which might be described as 'working on the linguistic aspects of talk'. Chapter Three is concerned with giving an outline to the shape of the labelling sequences which were collected, and, in so doing, contributes to an understanding of how labelling is managed. This activity, while recurrent in the homes of most children in this society and also particularly common in speech therapy clinics, is nonetheless one which has hitherto received little detailed description. Chapters Four and Five focus more specifically on the linguistic work which is accomplished within labelling. Chapter Four is concerned with the means by which lexical issues are worked on, while Chapter Five deals with work at the phonetic level.

The second aim of the study is to begin to investigate how far the didactic mechanisms identified in Chapters Four and Five are in operation in child-adult conversations outside the specialised 'instructional' setting of picture book labelling. To this end, Chapter Six presents data from some 'ordinary' adult-child conversations, and demonstrates that, here too, adults and children appear to be working on linguistic aspects of the child's talk in particular ways.

Before proceeding to an analysis of the data in Chapter Three, the following short chapter provides some background and some relevant discussion concerning the procedure of the study. Specifically, some issues relating to the nature, analysis and representation of the data are briefly discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DATA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses matters relating to the nature, analysis and representation of data in the study. Consideration of the nature of the data in section 2.2 concerns both contextual and background information relating to the participants and setting, and also the methods used in data collection. While certain background information is presented, consideration is also given to the pertinence of this type of detail to a study of this kind, and the status of contextual information (and facts about the linguistic development of the children who feature in the data) is discussed. With regard to the methods used in data collection, the relative merits of the two types of recording used - audio and video - are weighed against one another. In section 2.3, the analytic procedure of the study is outlined, and in section 2.4, there is a discussion of the choices which have been made concerning transcription method. Different notation systems are assessed for their appropriacy here, and a rationale is presented for the particular blend of notation systems which has been adopted. Finally, the set of transcription conventions which have been used in the data extracts presented throughout the four following chapters, is laid out at the end of this chapter for reference.

2.2 THE NATURE OF THE DATA

It is customary, in studies of children's language development, for certain contextual and background details concerning the participants in the data which has been studied, to be made available for consideration as a preliminary to the presentation of an analysis. Accordingly, in subsection 2.2.i below, some background information is provided relating to each data recording used in the analysis presented in later chapters. However, any investigator presenting this kind of information in the

2.2.i The Participants And Contextual Information

The data extracts which form the basis for analysis in the following four chapters of this study are taken from six audio and video recordings of four different children engaged in various activities individually with adults. During four of the six recordings, adult and child are looking together at picture books. All six recordings are of naturally-occurring interactions taking place in the child's home, between the child and a primary caretaker.

Some background information relating to the participants and the context of each recorded interaction are given below, along with a two-letter code for each recording (SO, TA, SF, TT, YL, CC). Every extract cited in subsequent chapters (where the participants are simply represented by the labels *child* and *adult*) appears with one of these codes, to allow reference to be made back to these details where such information might be felt to be of interest.

SO refers to approximately 14 minutes of audio recording of a male child in interaction with his mother. This child is aged 1;7 and living in Newcastle upon Tyne. He has never had speech therapy and his language development is taken to be normal. During the course of the recording, the participants engage in labelling from a picture book, interspersed with a variety of other activities.

TA refers to approximately 12 minutes of audio recording of the same child three months later, at the age of 1;10, interacting with his mother over a picture story book about Noah's ark.

SF refers to approximately 45 minutes of audio recording of the same child, also at 1;10, interacting with his mother. During the course of the recording, the participants play with toy animals, draw pictures, work on a jigsaw puzzle and talk about recent events.

TT refers to approximately 15 minutes of audio recording of a different male child, in interaction with his mother. This child is aged 2;3 and living in Eastwood, Nottingham. He has never had speech therapy, and scored within normal limits on the Reynell Developmental Language Scale. The exchange centres on an alphabetic (one picture per letter) picture book.

YL refers to approximately 5 minutes of video recording of a female child in a mealtime interaction with her mother. This child is aged 2;1 and living in York. She has never had speech therapy and her language development is taken to be normal.

CC refers to approximately 4 minutes of video recording of a female child in interaction with her father over a picture book. This child is aged 3:9, is living in York, and has Down's syndrome. Her developmental age in terms of expressive language (as measured by the Reynell Developmental Language Scale) is 1;4 - although consideration of her use of makaton signs (not accounted for by the Reynell scale) would increase her developmental age to at least 1;6. Since it has been observed (e.g. Gunn 1985) that the linguistic and interactional development of children with Down's syndrome seems to follow a path no different from that of children developing normally, except that it is followed more slowly, I felt satisfied that this data did not constitute too much of a special case to be included.

2.2.ii The Status Of Background Information In Analyses Of Interactional Talk

By comparison with comparable sets of background detail supplied in many studies of children's language, the above information relating to the context of the interactions being studied here may appear to be particularly scant. In particular, there are two kinds of information which may be felt to be important preliminaries to an interpretation of the kind of child-adult interactional data being presented in this study. First, it may be felt that certain kinds of information relating to the CONTEXT of the interactions are salient. These contextual factors can be further divided into two groups, following the distinction made by Schegloff (1992:195) between "external" or "distal" context, on the one hand, and "intra-interactional" or "proximate" context on the other. In the first group fall those features which may be said to constitute the 'social structure' within which the interaction takes place - those social attributes such as age, gender, social class, regional background, which each individual brings to the interaction, and the social roles which are thereby accorded to each participant relative to the other. In the second group fall those factors which determine what it is that the participants are doing in their interaction, or "the sort of occasion...which participants, by their conduct, make some episode to be an instance of" (Schegloff 1992:195). So, for instance, one may feel it relevant to an interpretation of the kind of analysis being presented in this study to know how much of the data represents 'mealtime talk', say, or indeed, 'labelling from picture books'. The second kind of information, in addition to these two types of contextual detail, which may be

considered important in the presentation of a study of this kind, is information relating to the LINGUISTIC LEVEL of the children concerned. Since the study is addressed to aspects of children's linguistic development, it may be felt that background information relating to the stage or rate of language development of each child is a prerequisite to an adequate interpretation of the findings the study presents.

It will be apparent that the background information supplied in subsection 2.2.i above carries little detail concerning either type of context just outlined, or concerning the level of linguistic development of the children involved. While some factors of distal context are identified - such as the gender of both participants and the age and regional background of the child - others (such as the age and social class identity of the adult, and whether the child is first born, for example) are not. Similarly, indication of the proximate context of each recording - the activities undertaken - is superficial. With regard to the linguistic level of the children, a distinction has been made between two children whose language development is deemed to be "normal", and two for whom a level of expressive language ability has been arrived at through formal testing. Of these two, one has scores falling within normal limits, while the other has been tentatively given a developmental age some two years or more below her chronological age. However, no measure of linguistic ability - such as a statement of MLU, for example - or of rate of linguistic growth, has been computed for each child. The remainder of this subsection will be addressed to considering the status of such details in relation to the interactional analysis which forms the body of this study, and to presenting an argument that, FOR THE KIND OF STUDY BEING UNDERTAKEN HERE, these details are not important. Contextual information and information relating to the child's level of linguistic development will be dealt with in turn.

Contextual information

Since the development of sociolinguistics as a substantial research field, linguists have been alerted to the importance of recognising the social attributes which

speakers bring to any language event. In a sociolinguistic framework, such social attributes as gender and ethnicity are seen as determining the linguistic choices which a speaker makes: these features, indeed, are characterised as the 'independent' variables, upon which linguistic variables are 'DEPENDENT'. However, such a framework typically omits to give explicit consideration to the way in which such categorisations are arrived at.

Schegloff (1991, 1992) presents an eloquent argument for the exercising of caution in approaching features of context with a view to their lending insight to the analysis of interactional talk. He points out that any categorisation of an individual - such as *female*, for example, or *middle class* - is a selection made among a vast number of alternative options available for characterising that individual. To justify the choice of any one categorisation over the others which are demonstrably available, then, Schegloff invokes the criterion of *relevance*, and more specifically, of relevance TO THE PARTICIPANTS. That is, he suggests that we as analysts are only justified in allowing a particular characterisation of an individual involved in interaction to play a part in our interpretation of the events of that interaction, if it can be demonstrated that the participants themselves are orienting to that characterisation, and embodying for one another the relevance of one or more party's 'femaleness' or 'middle-classness', for example, in the particular actions in which they are engaged. And even if it can be demonstrated that a particular contextual feature pertaining to a participant or to the setting is relevant to two interactants - for instance that an adult is orienting to the child's inability to process passive constructions, or that both participants are relevantly involved in a mealtime interaction - it does not necessarily follow that these features are consequential for the particular aspects of the talk being investigated - for instance for the ways in which repair initiations are prosodically designed, or for the structuring of question sequences. It remains to be shown, as Schegloff (1992:196) argues, that any of these features is *procedurally consequential* for the particular aspect of the interaction which is the focus of analysis.

It is through recognition of the importance of these two criteria, *relevance* and *procedural consequentiality*, in the bringing to bear of any contextual feature on an interpretation of interactional data, that the particularly uncertain status of distal or 'external' contextual factors becomes apparent. Schegloff points up a paradox here. If some external contextual factor - such as one participant being linguistically competent and the other not, for example - CAN be shown to be relevant for the participants and to have its relevance displayed in the details of the way the talk turns out, then that relevance itself, that orientation of the participants, becomes part of the proximate 'context' of the interaction - part of what it is that the participants are doing. Schegloff phrases the paradox as follows:

if some "external" context can be shown to be proximately (or intra-interactionally) relevant to the participants, then its external status is rendered beside the point; and if it cannot be so shown, then its external status is rendered equivocal (Schegloff 1992:197).

It becomes apparent, then, that features of the distal context of an interaction, such as the gender, age or social class identity of its participants, should not be taken to inform an analysis of the kind being presented in this study. Some of the children featuring in the data are girls, some are boys; some of the caretakers are women; one is a man. Yet an analysis of the particular interactional activities being explored here reveals nothing to suggest that in the accomplishment of these activities these gender distinctions are either being oriented to by the participants, or are proving consequential to the trajectory of the talk produced. There is therefore no warrant for making this distinction in the analysis. Similarly, there is no basis for suggesting that, for an adult, the activity of engaging in picture book labelling with a child of 1;7 is a different activity, or accomplished in different ways, from the activity of engaging in picture book labelling with a child of 2;3. Indeed, it is striking that across the age range of children represented in this data, the format of picture book labelling is remarkably consistent. The same caution applies to making distinctions between

participants on the basis of some feature like social class. While it may be felt, on an intuitive level, that such a categorisation could be shown to correlate with differences in the way in which adult-child interaction is conducted, and while, indeed, some studies (such as Wootton 1974) have been directed towards exploring just such correlations, there is nonetheless no warrant for proceeding on the basis that this kind of categorisation is salient for participants when they are engaged in a particular activity such as, in this case, labelling from picture books. There would be no more reason to focus on this distinction than there would to focus on a distinction between, for example, the ages of the adults. It is for a similar reason that the data from the child presenting with Down's syndrome is included in the analysis. The reason is simply that there is no reason for excluding it.

Of course, the argument here is not that distinctions between the ages or genders of children, or between social class groups, are never salient for the ways in which adult-child interaction is managed. The argument is that, until these distinctions are shown to be salient for the participants at the time at which the particular activity under scrutiny occurred, one has no warranted basis for invoking them. One may, of course, wish to study just these distinctions, and to focus on assessing their saliency. What is suggested by Schegloff's argument is that to do this one must start with an analysis of the talk, in order to identify "which out of that potential infinity of contexts and identities should be treated as relevant and consequential" (Schegloff 1992:197). Having thus identified contextual factors FROM THE TALK, one would have a basis from which to make a comparative investigation. However, such comparison is not a concern of the present study.

Having identified the problems associated with allowing factors of distal context to inform an analysis of the data, we are left with factors of proximate context - that is, with what it is that the participants are doing. How far is it informative to interpret our data analysis in the light of information concerning the kind of interactions which

the participants were engaged in at the time? Is it not valuable to know what the participants were doing with their talk before we attempt to interpret it?

This study is focally concerned with one particular activity accomplished through child-adult talk - the activity of labelling - and the findings presented in subsequent chapters are pertinent to the questions posed here in two particular ways. Firstly, the analysis presented in Chapter Six, which focusses on features of adult-child interaction taking place outside the (distal) setting of 'looking at picture books', reveals that the activity of labelling is accomplished here too. That is, that 'labelling' is a feature of the proximate context, not tied to any particular distal setting such as that in which picture books are present. This highlights the importance of making a distinction between setting on the one hand, and the type of activity being accomplished by the interactants on the other. This observation in turn points to the fact that an understanding of the activity being accomplished is only available AFTER analysis. The fact that the participants in the 'mundane conversations' being explored in Chapter Six are engaged in 'labelling', becomes apparent after extensive analysis of picture book situated interactions in Chapters Three, Four and Five. After analysis, then, one is in a position to make some statement of 'what the participants are doing with their talk'. Before analysis, any such description is premature.

Information regarding the child's linguistic level

A second kind of information which might be felt to be important as a preliminary to a study of this kind, relates to the level of the child's linguistic development; and it will be apparent that the details presented in 2.2.i give little information of this kind, either. Rather than being an oversight, however, this omission, too, is a principled one.

To elucidate the principles informing this omission, one may, to begin with, invoke a similar argument to that which was presented in the previous subsection to

justify an omission of detailed contextual information. While the age range of the children studied here extends from around 1;6 (this is the developmental age of the child with Down's syndrome) to 2;3, there is remarkable consistency to the way in which labelling is achieved across the data. Indeed, such consistency is corroborated by findings presented in the literature in this area. Ninio and Bruner (1978), whose study of picture book labelling is discussed in some detail in the following chapter, investigated the picture book labelling interactions of a single child between the ages of 0;8 and 1;6. They observed that the structure of these interactions was "highly constant" across the investigated period, and they suggest:

These constancies in the dialogue are quite remarkable if one considers that during the same period the child's linguistic performance undergoes profound changes...
(Ninio and Bruner 1978:6).

The activity of labelling, then, would appear to be achieved by a particular design of talk which is not essentially variable with the linguistic capabilities of the child. For instance, labelling is, for the most part, achieved with one-word utterances on the child's part. This is the case even with children who, as is evident from other instances of their talk, have progressed beyond the one-word level of linguistic development. Labelling, that is, can be identified and described without recourse to knowledge of the child's other linguistic skills.

Further, it may be noted that a presentation of the stage of linguistic development which each child in the data has reached, or of the rate at which each child is progressing in that development, would be a relevant step to take for several kinds of study which are essentially different from this one. While occupying much of the same territory as the studies of child directed speech discussed in Chapter One, this study takes a very different approach. It is not addressed to making claims as to whether or not adults, in interaction with children, tune their speech to the linguistic level of the child, or as to whether or not features of the adults' speech - or indeed of

the jointly constructed interaction - can be demonstrated to be facilitative of the child's linguistic growth. There has therefore been no attempt made to compute any kind of score for the child's level of linguistic achievement (not least because it is doubtful, in any case, whether such scores could ever capture a sufficiently rounded picture of the child's language abilities to incorporate all the various skills which may indeed be being 'worked on' at some level in a child's interactions with adults). My concern is with describing the didactic mechanisms at work in adult-child talk - not with devising any calculation of the 'effectiveness' of those mechanisms. For these reasons, the presentation of scores of the children's linguistic performance would seem tangential to the concerns of this study.

In this section so far, I have considered the nature of the data used in this study with regard to contextual and other background information concerning the participants in the data, and the activities in which they were involved when the recording were made. The following subsection will consider a further aspect of the nature of the data used - the methods which were employed in its collection.

2.2.iii Data Collection

A problem which must always be faced in a study of this kind is a decision concerning the most profitable way of collecting data for analysis. It would seem impossible to satisfy, simultaneously, the two optimal conditions which lead researchers in two different directions on this issue. On the one hand it is desirable to have data which is 'rich' (MacLure 1981:75), and includes a record of as many non-linguistic features of the talk as possible - features such as gesture, facial expressions, gaze, referents of referring expressions, and so on. On the other, for certain kinds of study the uncontaminated naturalness of the data is at a premium.⁴ Since the concerns of this study are with the routine, naturally-occurring conversations in which young children engage, the priority here must be to the naturalness of the data. This

⁴See MacLure 1981 for a detailed discussion of, and historical perspective on, the issues involved here.

has necessarily been at the expense of having as detailed a non-linguistic contextual record as would ideally be desirable.

The data used in this study was all recorded in the child's home, rather than in an unfamiliar setting, and involves interactions between the children and their usual caretakers. This is because the focus of this study is on the kinds of interactions which children are routinely party to. There may, of course, be no difference between the structure of picture labelling sequences produced in these conditions and those produced with unfamiliar interactants. However, it seemed appropriate, in an investigation of the child's usual linguistic environment, to begin with routine kinds of interactions involving routine participants.

Of the six data recordings outlined in 2.2.i above, four are audio recordings and two are recorded on videotape. Of the four audio recordings, three (SO, TA and SF) were collected by the author, using a rather indirect method. The audio recording equipment was left with the adult, who was asked to switch it on at some point over the coming days when a routine interaction was taking place. There were no special instructions to look at picture books, and the adult was given the impression that features of the child's speech only, not of her own, were under scrutiny. The fourth audio recording (TT) was collected in a very similar fashion by another investigator.

Clearly, there are certain disadvantages to the use of audio data for the analysis of social interaction, as compared with video data. It allows no access to such valuable information as the use of gestures and gaze, the spatial configuration of participants, and other non-auditory aspects of the interaction. This data is, then, in some sense 'poorer' than a video record would have been. However, in the situations in which this data was recorded, the use of video equipment would have been extremely intrusive, particularly for the adults concerned, and would almost inevitably have resulted in a less 'natural' interaction. Given the commitment of this study to

capturing instances of the child's routine linguistic environment, then, the loss of a maximally full non-linguistic record was deemed preferable to a loss in the naturalness of the interaction recorded. For the same reasons, no observer was present during the recordings to make a written record of non-auditory information, such as many researchers have benefited from as a supplement to their audio recordings. Once again, the detriment to natural spontaneity which such a presence would have caused seemed to pose a more serious threat to the value of the data collected.

To supplement this audio data, two video recordings have also been included in the corpus. Both of these were made by another investigator, one (YL) of his own child interacting with her mother at a mealtime, and the other (CC) of a picture book interaction taking place in another home. In both these cases, it can be assumed that the video camera was less invasive and disruptive than it would have been in the situations in which the audio data was collected. The YL recording forms part of a series of video recordings made in this child's home by her caretakers, charting her development in regular intervals over a number of years. All participants, then, were used to the video equipment being in operation as a regular occurrence in the home, and no outsiders were involved in the making of the recording.⁵ The CC recording, while it was made by an outsider visiting the child's home, involves a child who was having speech therapy. It may well be, then, that engaging in picture book labelling in front of a video camera was not an unfamiliar experience for this child. It may be, too, that the activity of labelling (which occupies the whole of this recording) is so routinised in its format as to be rather more robust in the face of potential contamination from observation than more mundane forms of conversation would be.

The data corpus, then, comprises both audio and video recordings of both labelling and non-labelling interactions. While it is clear that the video recordings are 'richer'

⁵It should also, perhaps, be noted that no specific research designs were in the mind of the investigator at the time of data collection.

in many ways, by allowing access to certain kinds of information not made available by the audio recordings, it should not be assumed that the audio data is seriously deficient. After all, this study is not concerned with many of the aspects of social interaction - such as kinesics, for example, or eye gaze - which form part of the communicative behaviours in which children and adults engage. Instead, it is restricted to features of TALK - the linguistic aspects of that interaction. The features which I am interested in, then, are by and large audible ones. Of course, when one is conducting a detailed analysis of interactional talk, there are advantages to having a view of the interaction taking place, since this may provide grounds or evidence to support certain claims about what a given portion of the talk is doing. But some of this evidence is also available from an audio record. The difference is that, when one is working from an audio record, one may have slightly fewer strands of evidence to bring to bear on some of the claims that one makes, or perhaps there will be a few claims which simply cannot be made. But there will be many claims and detailed observations which CAN be made, and justifiably so, on the basis of an audio record alone. That is, many of the claims which one may wish to make in such an analysis are independent of visual information relating to the context of the talk. In the interpretation of both kinds of data (audio and video) for the particular purposes of this study, no substantive differences between them were felt to impinge on the process of data analysis.

2.2.iv Summary

In this section, a number of issues relating to the nature of the data to be presented in subsequent chapters have been addressed. While some background information relating to the participants in the data and the context of recording has been presented, it has been argued that the particular concerns of this study suggest alignment with the position adopted by Schegloff (1991, 1992) on the matter of context. This position proposes that, until contextual features can be shown to be both relevant to the participants engaged in talk, and consequential at the time for the ways in which

any action being studied is accomplished, the investigator with truly empirical aspirations is ill-advised to invoke them, or to let them inform the interpretation of the data at hand. Thus, the concerns of this study, which is empirical and descriptive in its approach, make inappropriate a custom which may at first seem a necessary part of a child language study. A second custom, that of presenting some measure of the child participants' linguistic growth, has likewise been seen to be ill-fitted to a study which, while linguistic in its orientation, nonetheless takes neither a developmental perspective on the behaviours observed, nor an interest in identifying changes or 'effects' which may be evident in the children's linguistic productions. Rather, the aim of this study is an in-depth descriptive analysis of the interactions which are its focus. In two particular ways, then, the orientation of this particular study results in a rather different content to a section entitled "The Nature Of The Data" than would be the case in many child language investigations.

Finally, consideration has been given to the methods employed in data collection, and the relative merits and demerits of audio and video data have been assessed. While the advantages offered by a visual record of interactional talk have been noted, it has nonetheless been argued that the audio data which forms part of the data corpus carries advantages of its own in that observer contamination was minimised in its collection. Furthermore, it has been suggested that audio data is quite adequate for most purposes when it is the linguistic aspects of an interaction which are the focus of attention.

In the following section, a brief outline will be given to the procedures which were involved in the interpretation and analysis of the data, once it had been collected.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The approach taken to analysis of the data was necessarily slightly different for the two kinds of data being examined - on the one hand, the picture book data presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five, and on the other, the conversational data presented in Chapter Six. In this section I shall briefly outline the two modes of approach.

For the analysis of the picture book material, a collection was made of all the labelling sequences identifiable in the corpus. The notion of *labelling sequence* here is made a workable one, by virtue of the routinised nature of picture book labelling as an activity accomplished within a recurrent format. A sequence here refers to a stretch of talk which is concerned with the labelling of any one pictorial referent, and such sequences were readily identifiable and distinguishable from one another. 18 labelling sequences were gathered from the SO recording, 26 from the TA recording, 25 from the TT recording, and 31 from the CC recording. Thus a total of 100 labelling sequences was transcribed to form a data set.

The fact that a collection of discrete labelling sequences could be amassed in this way, enabled a systematic analytic procedure which is often not so directly facilitated in conversation analytic work. The whole collection could be worked through systematically, with any phenomena which came to light being checked and compared comprehensively across the whole set. It was therefore possible to gauge the frequency of any given phenomenon (say, repair being initiated on the child's label, or the child's failing to respond to an elicitation) proportionately within this 100 instance sample.

In embarking on the analysis of the mundane conversational data, by contrast, it was not possible to take this kind of approach, since it was not possible to amass a set of comparable sequences in the same way. Sequences of interaction in a mundane setting, not confined within the bounds of a routine like picture book labelling, may

be accomplishing any or several of a wide array of social actions. Only AFTER extensive analysis can two or more sequences of such talk be said to constitute any kind of set. The approach taken in undertaking the analysis of mundane conversational talk presented in Chapter Six, therefore, was to use the findings from the analysis of picture book sequences as a basis for an initial comparative examination, to see how far the didactic features of labelling talk could also be identified in more ordinary conversations.

This, then, was the approach taken to data analysis. The details of that analysis form the content of the following four chapters. Before this analysis is presented, however, one further aspect of the data used in this study requires attention. Consideration must be given to the choices made between the various options available for the REPRESENTATION of data in the study. This is the concern of the following section.

2.4 DATA REPRESENTATION

In this section, the relative merits and demerits of different notation systems are considered, and the principles guiding the choice of conventions to be used in the transcribed extracts appearing in subsequent chapters are discussed. In subsection 2.4.ii, these chosen conventions are listed.

2.4.i Notation Systems

In a study of this kind, certain decisions must be taken concerning the notation system to be employed in the transcription of data for presentation. Many child language studies evade this problem altogether, by never presenting transcribed utterances at all but instead relying on statistical tables for their data. These tables typically represent quantitative features of the language material being investigated, such as the percentage of utterances in an exchange which are questions, or expansions, for example. In such studies, the real data - the talk under investigation - remains

invisible. And where transcribed data does appear in studies of child language, extracts presented are typically few, and the tendency is for the notation systems employed to be rather scant, with little indication, for example, of certain interactional features such as the overlapping of turns at talk, or the length of pauses. In this study, descriptive data analysis forms the core of the research, and therefore transcribed data extracts are liberally presented throughout the following four chapters. It therefore seems particularly important to give consideration to the decisions which have been taken concerning the notation system used in the presentation of those extracts.

The practice of transcription is, in all its manifestations, necessarily a selective process. There is no single 'best' way to transcribe language material: rather, one selects among a near infinitude of available options, according to the purposes to which the record produced is to be put. In the case of the present study, the starting point for the decision to be made is that, in a study of this kind, it is the audio or video recording, and not the transcript, which is the primary data for analysis. Analytic procedures rely on observation of what can be heard (and perhaps seen) on the tape - not on what can be seen on the page. The transcript, while it may aid orientation while listening, is primarily produced for the purpose of representing the data visually, for the benefit of the reader. The decision to be faced, then, when devising a notation system, concerns not which features are to be captured for the purposes of analysis, but rather, how best the analysis presented in the text may be visually supported for the reader.⁶

The mode of analysis adopted in this study is, as was discussed in Chapter One, a conversation analytic one. There is a set of conventions for transcript notation which

⁶This starting point is not shared by many analyses of talk. See, for example, the discussion of transcription practice in studies of child-adult talk presented by Ochs 1979, who assumes that in most such studies "the transcriptions are the researcher's data" (Ochs 1979:44). When transcripts have data status, there are clearly many pertinent questions to be addressed concerning the selective process by which they are produced. Because of the rather different status awarded to the transcribed extracts being presented in this study, these questions need not detain us here.

are widely used in conversation analytic research. They were developed by Gail Jefferson, and are set out in Atkinson and Heritage (1984: ix - xvi). These conventions, since they were developed for handling the fine details of interactional talk, would seem an obvious choice for the notation to be used in this study, and indeed, many of them have been adopted here. However, there are also certain problems associated with this notation, which become particularly apparent when an interactional analysis has, like this one, a linguistic orientation. For this study, then, a traditional conversation analytic notation has been supplemented by further conventions which award a finer degree of phonetic detail than would be possible using Jefferson's conventions alone. In the remainder of this subsection, an indication will first be given of the ways in which a traditional conversation analytic notation can be particularly sensitive in the handling of certain aspects of conversational data. Some of the shortcomings of the notation when dealing with phonetic aspects of the data will then be discussed, and an outline will be given to the rationale for the blend of conventions which are to be used in this study.

Some sensitivities of conversation analytic notation

Conversation analysis, as was discussed in the previous chapter, is an approach to the analysis of talk which explicitly focusses on a level of detail in interactional behaviour which is typically missed in other approaches. Indeed, it is a fundamental tenet of CA procedure that

no order of detail in conversational interaction can be dismissed a priori as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant (Heritage 1989: 22).

Now, if the taped recording of an interaction, rather than a transcript, is genuinely forming the primary data for analysis, then this tenet of CA procedure would not, of itself, require a transcript to represent a high level of interactional detail. Details should not be ignored at the time of analysis, but this does not necessarily mean that these details must find their way into a transcript, if the purpose of that transcript is to

provide visual support to a textually presented analysis which has been based on a tape recording. However, the result of this principle has been that CA researchers have found that certain fine details, of a kind typically ignored in many other approaches to the study of talk, have indeed turned out to be very important to their analyses. For example, the precise placing of overlapping segments of talk, with regard to the syntactic structure of the turns into which they are incursive, has been found to conform to remarkably orderly patterns (Jefferson 1983, 1986). Across a range of conversation analytic work, audible inbreaths in talk, a feature generally disregarded in linguistic analyses, have been recognised as an important feature of turn-taking behaviour, from which implications can be drawn concerning participants' orientations to the potential completion of a turn, or, viewed alternatively, the 'transition-ready' status of moments in talk. And as a third example, the precise timing of pauses between turns has been found by Jefferson (1989) to have implications for the trajectory of the talk which follows them. Thus, since behavioural minutiae have been found to have considerable consequence for the ways in which interactional talk is managed, and have in some cases become the focus of scrutiny, then the notation system which has been developed for use in this research area has necessarily found ways to represent these minutiae.

The CA notation system, therefore, carries principled conventions for the systematic representation of overlapping, simultaneous and contiguous utterances; audible respiratory behaviours; and pauses, timed to tenths of a second. All of these conventions have been adopted in the notation used in this study.

Some shortcomings of conversation analytic notation

While certain CA notation conventions are principled and systematic, however, others appear not to be, particularly when considered from a linguistic point of view⁷. Two areas in particular can be singled out as presenting significant problems - the use of a

⁷Kelly and Local 1989a have pointed to some of the problems raised by CA notation with regard to a phonetic analysis of conversational material.

modified standard orthography to represent articulatory features of an utterance, and the use of conventional punctuation marks to represent pitch phenomena. Both can be illustrated from the following extract (presented in Heritage and Atkinson 1984:14) which has been selected at random to exemplify a typical usage of this notation. The extract involves two American speakers and is taken from a set of recordings widely cited in conversation analytic work. The representation of articulatory and pitch phenomena in this extract will be examined in turn.

[NB:II:1:R:10]

- 1 E: she gets ↓awful depressed over these things↓
- 2 yihknow she's rea:l (0.2) p'litical
- mi:nded'n,
- 3 (0.3)
- 4 L: Ye:ah:
- 5 E: wə {r k -}
- 6 L: {She a} Democra:t?
- 7 E: ·t·hhhh I vote eether wa:y.h
- 8 (.)
- 9 L: Yeah,
- 10 E: ·hmhh·t·h I didn' git tuh yote I de:cline' tuh
- 11 state this ti:me when I registered so:...

Articulatory phenomena

In this extract, there are a number of instances where standard English orthography has been modified in an attempt to represent articulatory qualities of the talk. An examination of these modifications will illustrate some of the dangers of opting to represent these phenomena in this way. The problem here is that to use a standard orthography, and then on occasion to modify it, suggests that one is orienting to some notion of a standard or norm in speech, and hence to deviations from that norm. This notation therefore takes an interpretative stance with regard to the phonetic phenomena which characterise the talk. An examination of the orthographic modifications found in the extract above shows that on occasion these modifications, suggesting markedness of some kind, are used to represent phonetic events which are nonetheless quite usual and unremarkable in English speech.

For example, the two instances of *tuh* in line 10 seem to be representing the fact that the word *to* here has a centralised vowel quality, rather than the close back quality which is associated with the citation form of this word, as recognised in most descriptions of English. However, a centralised vowel quality is quite characteristic of *to* when it forms an unaccented syllable. The occurrence of *yih* in *yihknow* in line 1 also represents a 'weak' form of this syllable, and marks the fact that the vowel does not have the close back quality which it characteristically has when the syllable is accented. (This form also appears to be orienting to the particular (regional) variant of *you* produced here, with a close and front vowel quality, in contrast to a variant with a more central vowel quality which might, perhaps, be represented *yuh* or *ya*. A similar representation of regional characteristics seems to inform the choice of *git* in line 10.)

Apostrophes appear to be used in this extract, rather as they are in standard English orthography, to indicate perceived 'omissions' of one kind or another - but a closer look reveals that they are representing a particularly wide range of phonetic phenomena. In line 2, the apostrophe in *p'litical* represents a feature of the syllable structure of the realisation of this word (the fact that it is trisyllabic) not suggested by standard orthography ('elision' in traditional phonological analyses); while '*n*' indicates that *and* here is being realised with a syllable whose sole articulatory exponency is alveolar closure with nasal resonance. Both of these phenomena are quite characteristic of the realisation of these words when they occur in normal speech. So, too, are the phenomena which are indicated by the two instances of an apostrophe in line 10, in *didn' git* and in *decline' tuh*. Here, the apostrophe is used to represent particular features of articulatory transition. In *didn' git*, the apostrophe appears to be marking the fact that the transition from an alveolar closure with nasal resonance to a velar closure occurs without oral release of the alveolar closure. In *decline' tuh*, the apostrophe represents the occurrence of a single alveolar closure (rather than a sequence of two closures) dividing the two final syllabic nuclei of the utterance.

It is apparent, then, that many of these modifications of standard spelling represent phonetic features which are quite usual in English, and which are inappropriately awarded the status of deviations from a norm. One is led to question, therefore, what counts as the norm in making these choices, since the phonetic phenomena presented as 'deviations' do not appear to have been systematically selected. For example, the choice to modify the spelling of *to* and *and* seems to be based on the fact that what is heard is a version which is unlike [tu] and [and]. Yet such versions would be uncharacteristic of most varieties of English when those syllables were unaccented. Other modifications, on the other hand, such as *yih* and *git*, seem to represent rather more idiosyncratic features of individual (or groups of) speakers. At least two criteria, then, seem to have come into play in making the interpretative decisions involved here. Firstly, the norm would appear to be based on a particular regional variety (or set of varieties) of American English for which *you* is NOT realised with a close front vowel. Secondly, this norm seems to be making appeal to some notion of the articulatory shape of lexical items when they occur in citations, or when their syllables are accented, rather than to their recurrent phonetic exponency in conversational speech. This is clearly not a helpful way of handling the phonetics of interactional talk.

The problem is particularly well highlighted by the instance of the word *either* in line 7. The first syllable of this word sometimes occurs in English speech with a monophthongal nucleus, [i], and sometimes with a diphthongal nucleus, [ai]. The two forms seem to be neither regionally nor socially nor stylistically distinguished. The spelling of *eether* in line 7 represents the fact that the first of these two forms is the one produced here. But how, one wonders, would the second realisation, with a diphthongal nucleus, have been represented? With standard orthography? The suggestion seems to be that the pronunciation found here is in some way marked, yet there is clearly no principled basis for such a marking.

The problem, of course, is that one cannot systematically modify English orthography to represent phonetic phenomena, since English orthography is not a systematic phonetic notation to start with. Any modifications one makes to such a system are therefore bound to be unsystematic. One might question, for example, why *yihknow* in line 1 is presented as a single word. What does this signify? One might also question why the *k* - or for that matter the *w* - in this word have been retained from standard spelling, if they correspond to no feature of the word's phonetic properties. Clearly, if the phonetic characteristics of an utterance are to be indicated, this purpose is much better served by a notation systematically devised for this purpose, such as, for instance, the notation of the International Phonetic Association.

Pitch phenomena

A second area of difficulty of the CA notation which can also be illustrated from the extract cited above is the representation of pitch phenomena, for which a combination of arrows and familiar markings of punctuation are used. Vertical arrows of the kind found in line 1 indicate "marked rising and falling shifts in intonation" (Atkinson and Heritage xii), while the commas in lines 2 and 9 indicate "a continuing intonation" (ibid. xi), and the full stop in line 7 "a stopping fall in tone". A question mark is used to indicate "a rising inflection, not necessarily a question", and the combination of question mark and comma, as is found in line 6, "a rising intonation weaker than that indicated by a question mark".

Clearly, while these distinctions may have some general, intuitively accessible value, they are not at all specific. A "continuing intonation", for instance, is not a descriptive label but an interpretative one; and it is not at all clear what is meant by a "weaker" rising intonation (a rise over a narrower pitch range, perhaps, or one of shorter duration?). For any serious treatment of pitch phenomena in talk, these conventions are clearly inadequate. Much more satisfactory would be an

impressionistic graphic representation of pitch contour accompanying the text of the transcript.

The traditional CA notation, then, while it is systematic in some areas of representation, is clearly not so in others, and in these areas must be treated with caution. English orthography is simply not a sound basis for any representation of phonetic detail, since it is not itself a systematic phonetic notation. Any modifications made to it to this end therefore result in INTERPRETATIVE implications which are not necessarily intended, by implying the concepts of norm and deviation. And for the handling of certain non-articulatory phonetic parameters such as pitch range and movement, the resources available in this notation are clearly so unspecific as to be simply uninformative.

The solution adopted here

One solution to the problems posed by the representation of articulatory features as discussed above would be to use consistently a phonetic notation such as that of the International Phonetic Association (IPA). While this particular notation has been shown to pose certain problems for the transcription of conversational material (Kelly and Local 1989a), it nonetheless has the advantage over CA notation or any kind of modified standard orthography, in that it enjoys wide recognition among linguists as being a (reasonably) systematic notation which is phonetically-motivated. However, while an IPA notation may be very informative for the illustration of the phonetic qualities of relatively short utterances, its benefits diminish considerably when longer passages of interactional talk are to be represented. If lengthy interchanges, spanning several turns at talk, were to be presented in IPA notation, the result would be to make the data extracts highly inaccessible. A swift and comprehensive reading would be denied to most readers (even trained phoneticians), and the process of interpretation of the data extracts would be considerably hindered.

The decision that has been taken, then, for the representation of data extracts in this study, has been to transcribe phonetically just those parts of the extracts which are the focus of phonetic interest, or which are not readily interpretable, and to transcribe other parts of the talk using standard orthography. The parts which are transcribed phonetically employ the conventions of the IPA (as revised to 1989), and certain extensions to that notation developed for the transcription of atypical speech by Duckworth, Allen, Hardcastle and Ball (1990). Certain non-articulatory features are represented with extensions to the IPA notation developed by Kelly and Local (1989b). The parts which are transcribed phonetically in this way are clearly demarcated from those parts which are represented in standard orthography by being placed in square brackets. This avoids the danger of inconsistency in the notation, or of symbols having ambivalent or indeterminate status. In selected instances, pitch height and movement are represented impressionistically with a contour above the text of the transcript, this contour being placed between staves, in order to indicate relative pitch height within the speaker's pitch range.

For those parts of the talk for which attention is not focussed on phonetic phenomena, a standard orthography has been used. While modifications to standard spelling have been almost entirely avoided (for the reasons outlined above), some other features of CA notation which attempt to represent phonetic qualities of the talk have nonetheless been retained. For instance, colons appear in the orthographic text to give some indication of the duration of sounds, certain portions are underlined to indicate prominence or emphasis, and upper case letters are used to represent loudness. It is recognised that these markings are phonetically crude - and these phenomena are handled more systematically and sensitively in those portions of the talk which are transcribed phonetically. Nonetheless, it was felt that retaining these conventions in the remaining parts of the transcript would convey to the reader a better impression of the rhythm and prosodic shape of the talk than would an unmarked orthographic text. Throughout the extracts, those conventions of CA notation identified above as

systematic and informative, namely those relating to overlap, and to respiratory and pausal phenomena, have been retained. A full list of the conventions used (other than those published by the IPA), is presented in subsection 2.4.ii below.

The decision which has been taken, then, involves a mixture of conventions from two traditional notation systems - the IPA notation (as extended by two groups of researchers, the first for the purposes of transcribing atypical - including developmental - speech, and the second for the transcription of conversational interaction), and the notation traditionally used (by non-linguists) in conversation analytic research. The decision has been based on a desire to retain those aspects of CA notation which seem particularly sensitive to certain details of interactional talk, while rejecting those which are unsystematic from a linguistic point of view. A further consideration has been to maximise, where possible, the readability of the data. Since square brackets are used to demarcate the two notation systems, no confusion should arise. Such a blending of notations seems quite acceptable in work where the primary data for analysis is auditory, rendering the status of a transcript as that of expository tool.

2.4.ii Transcription Conventions Used In This Study

Phonetic transcription

The following markings are used, to supplement the symbol stock of the IPA, on those parts of the talk which are transcribed phonetically and placed within square brackets. For illustration here, [x] is used to refer to any IPA symbol.

[x]	denasal
[x↓]	ingressive airflow
[x̤]	whispered
[xxxxx] < >	increased loudness
[<u>b</u>]	voiced labiodental plosive

Loudness phenomena across stretches of talk are indicated with *p.* (piano), *pp.* (pianissimo), *f.* (forte) and *ff.* (fortissimo) placed with a square brace under stretches of text.

In line with current IPA practice, aspirated plosives are marked with a diacritic [x^h], and unaspirated plosives are unmarked.

Orthographic transcription

In those parts of the text not enclosed in square brackets the following markings are used. For illustration here, x is used to refer to any letter.

(0.5)	pauses, timed to tenths of a second
x: or x::: etc.	sound of long duration
x-	sound cut off abruptly
<u>x</u>	prominence or emphasis
X	louder than surrounding talk
°x°	quieter than surrounding talk
>xx<	faster than surrounding talk
hh	audible outbreaths
·hh	audible inbreaths

Round brackets are placed around letters representing breaths or laughter in the middle of words, for example: (heh) 'a(h)t's i(h)t

Throughout

Throughout both kinds of transcription, the following markings are used.

	pitch contour is represented impressionistically, between staves
---	--

<u>xxxxxxxx</u> breathy	long domain phonetic characteristics are represented with a square brace under the text
xxx{xx} {xx}x	overlapping talk is represented with curly brackets
xxxx = = xxx	contiguous or 'latched' utterances
(())	non-verbal information
(xxxxx)	doubtful hearing
()	undecipherable utterance
→	an arrow in the left margin indicates a feature of the extract to which attention is being drawn

2.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has been addressed to clarifying and justifying some of the decisions which have underlain procedural aspects of the study. It has been argued that the particular concerns of this study, and the particular analytical framework in which it is couched, have prompted procedural decisions which differ in some respects from those taken in other studies of child-adult talk reported in the literature. To begin with, it has been proposed that the analysis presented in the following chapters does not rely on (and indeed should not invoke) knowledge of either contextual information relating to the participants or setting of the recordings, or information relating to the level of linguistic development reached by each child. Because of this, much less of this kind of information has been supplied than is the case in some child language studies. Secondly, it has been suggested that, while the value of video recordings cannot be denied, the audio recordings which form part of the data corpus are not deficient, since it is the auditory aspects of the interaction which are under scrutiny here. And finally, a somewhat different stance has been taken here with regard to the status of transcripts than would appear to be the case in many studies of children's language. Here, the transcript does NOT constitute the data for analysis. This has enabled a different set of principles to guide the selective process of

transcription than would otherwise be the case, and has prompted the decision to employ here a blend of traditional notation systems.

The following four chapters are concerned with the presentation of data analysis. Chapters Three, Four, and Five deal exclusively with picture book interactions. While Chapters Four and Five are addressed to particular aspects of the 'working on talk' which occurs in these interactions, the following chapter introduces this analysis with a brief consideration of prior investigations into picture book talk which have been documented in the literature, and then investigates in some detail the structure of the labelling sequences which have been collected for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

PICTURE BOOK LABELLING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Of all the developing linguistic skills observable in the young child, one of those which is probably most immediately apparent and accessible to the observer is the child's acquisition of new vocabulary items. Very often these newly acquired words are observed in the context of acts of ostensive definition, when they are used to assign names to people, objects and representations in the child's immediate environment. An activity commonly undertaken by caretaker and child (in western cultures at least) which centres on this developing skill, is joint picture book 'reading' - a routinised activity where adult and child focus joint attention on a series of pictures in a book, while the child displays an ability to articulate an appropriate label for each pictorial referent. The talk which accompanies, and realises, this activity is the focus of analysis in this and the following two chapters of the study.

A variety of views has been expressed as to the function of early nominals in the child's developing language generally (Werner and Kaplan 1963; Brown 1973; Halliday 1975), but in the picture book setting, as the analysis presented in this chapter will demonstrate, a child's labels are fundamentally built as displays of the child's lexical knowledge. Thus, picture book labelling sequences have certain features in common with the kind of 'testing' interaction detailed by Marlaire and Maynard (1990). The adult involved in picture book labelling is in possession of certain knowledge, which is being 'tested' in the child. However, the role of the adult here extends beyond identifying gaps in the child's knowledge: the adult may also undertake to fill those gaps, by imparting relevant information. These sequences, then, also share features with styles of 'instructional' interaction (Mehan 1979; McHoul 1978) which have been observed in the classroom setting.

In this chapter, consideration will first of all be given to the small body of literature which documents picture book interactions between adults and children; and in particular, the work of Ninio and Bruner (1978), which remains the most comprehensive treatment of the topic to date, will receive critical attention. An outline will then be given, in section 3.3, to the structure of the picture labelling sequences which form the data corpus here, in order to orient the reader in preparation for the more detailed analysis of picture book talk which occupies the remainder of the chapter. This analysis represents the result of a systematic investigation of the picture book corpus, and focusses in turn on the different means by which labelling sequences are initiated by the adult; on the ways in which these sequences are managed when an adult's initiation fails to elicit a satisfactory move on the part of the child; and on the opportunities available to the child for initiating a labelling sequence. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to explicate, by means of an in-depth analysis of the structure of these sequences, some of the constituent features of the activity of labelling. The analysis presented here, addressed to an uncovering of the nature of labelling talk, thus sets the scene for an investigation, presented in Chapters Four and Five, into the ways in which the child's lexical and phonetic abilities are worked on in this talk.

3.2 DOCUMENTED ANALYSES OF PICTURE BOOK INTERACTIONS

Despite the recurrence of the picture labelling activity in children's routine environments (and its widespread occurrence in interactions directed towards the assessment and remediation of children with language learning difficulties), it is an activity which has been relatively poorly documented in the child language literature. Joint picture book reading involving children older than those whose talk is under investigation here, has been studied to shed light on the development of representational skills (Sorsby and Martlew 1991), and also for the way in which, as a

well-defined, repetitive routine, it facilitates the acquisition of recurrent linguistic forms (Snow and Goldfield 1983). In both cases, the focus of concern is with the picture book reading of children well past the one-word stage of linguistic development, at a stage where the activity goes beyond the task of simple labelling. Picture book labelling *per se* is most thoroughly treated in the work of Ninio (Ninio and Bruner 1978; Ninio 1980a; 1980b; 1983), who focusses on structural aspects of the picture book labelling routine between the ages of 0;8 and 1;10.

Ninio (1980a) deals in particular with the way in which the naming of parts of objects is dealt with, and Ninio (1980b) focusses on differences in labelling behaviour across different socioeconomic classes. Ninio (1983), building on earlier work (Ninio and Bruner 1978) considers the different formats chosen by the adult in a labelling interaction, and the different forms of child response which each encourages. A distinction is drawn between "production", "comprehension", and "imitation" in the labelling utterances of the child, and particular attention is paid to the ways in which repeated occurrences of the same label are treated by a number of child-adult pairs. On the basis of a statistical analysis of correct and incorrect labelling actions on the part of the child, Ninio concludes that the adult is able to select from a number of labelling formats which place differential demands on the child, and thus proposes "the operation of maternal fine-tuning in the teaching of the first lexicon" (1983:451). These observations are consistent with, although arrived at differently from, some findings of the work presented here. However, it is the earlier work of Ninio, in conjunction with Bruner (Ninio and Bruner 1978), which remains the most detailed and most comprehensive treatment of the structure of picture book labelling sequences to date, and the findings of their work have a direct relevance to the study being reported here. Before moving on to an analysis of my own data, therefore, it will be useful to assess the findings of Ninio and Bruner, and to give some critical consideration to their approach.

3.2.i Ninio And Bruner's Analysis

Ninio and Bruner (1978) were concerned both with detailing the structural features of the "ritualised dialogue" which the picture book labelling activity entails, and with charting the development of those features in the labelling behaviour of one child-adult dyad over a ten month period from the age of 0;8 to 1;6. They found that certain structural features of the dialogue, such as the mean number of turns per "cycle" (roughly, a sequence of talk about any particular picture), and the mean duration of cycles and of turns, as well as the kinds of utterances used by the adult, showed a high level of constancy throughout the period of the study, while there was an increase in the child's active participation in the dialogue, in the number of vocalisations he produced, and in the proportion of these which were (or were deemed by the investigators, at least, to be) lexical labels.

Ninio and Bruner identify a turning point at the age of 1;2 when this particular child started to produce vocalisations which were "recognisable approximations to lexical labels" (10), and they note that at this point there was a change in the way the adult treated "non-lexical" child vocalisations. Whereas previously she had treated them as if they were attempts at labels, by confirming them and supplying a correct label, now she responded by asking a question such as *what's that?* - in effect requiring the child to display the more advanced skills which she now considered him capable of. This is an interesting observation concerning the options which the adult has for fitting the demands of the interaction to the perceived abilities of the child. However, it illustrates one of the ways in which the approach taken by Ninio and Bruner, although it is focussed on the rules of interaction, falls short of being a truly interactional approach. The problem here is that it is not at all clear on what grounds lexical and non-lexical utterances are being distinguished, except by some (necessarily arbitrary) external judgement by the investigators. We have no interactional evidence, for instance, to make it clear that these "non-lexical" utterances are not, for the child, attempts at lexical labels.

With regard to the structure of the dialogue, Ninio and Bruner identify four "key utterance types" which account for almost all of the adult's utterances. These are the "attentional vocative" (*look* etc.), the "query" (*what's that?* etc.), the "label" (*it's an x*), and a "feedback" utterance, which could be positive (*yes*) or negative (*no, it's not x*). They note that in any labelling cycle there is always at least one of these, and that when there are more, they are nearly always ordered in this way. All incorrect labels received negative feedback, while 81% of correct labels were "reinforced" by positive feedback. This positive feedback consisted of three elements - "idealised imitation of the child's label", *yes*, and laughter, with this "imitation" occurring in 77.5% of all instances.

The way in which such categories fail to capture important interactional distinctions, can be illustrated with reference to this last notion of imitation. To begin with, the term is being used rather loosely. Both Keenan (1977) and McTear (1978) have identified a distinction between *imitation* and *repetition* in relation to children's own utterances, but this distinction has, unfortunately, rarely been adopted in consideration of adult utterances which 'redo' those of children. While repetition is taken to be a formal relation holding between two utterances, imitation is more properly defined as a social act (Keenan 1977:127). The difference, then, is one of intentionality. McTear (1978:294) defines *imitation* in the following way:

in imitation a subject observes a model and this experience shapes the subject's own subsequent behaviour in the direction of greater similarity to the model.

Although this is a definition which is clearly more applicable to the concept of a child's imitation of an adult model, in the process of language development, there is, I think, a clear distinction between repetition and imitation inherent in McTear's observation. If *repetition* is a term which is not functionally implicative, but refers purely to the formal relationship holding between two utterances, then a repetition

may be a repetition by chance, or for many different reasons. Imitation, on the other hand, is a repetition which specifically AIMS TO COPY.⁸ In light of such a definition, the kind of "idealised imitation" identified by Ninio and Bruner can be seen to be, not only inappropriately named, but a contradiction in terms. It is repetition which we are dealing with here.

More significant, though, than terminological distinctions, is the fact that repetition by the adult in such a position in sequence can be seen to be performing a number of different kinds of interactional work, which are not distinguished or made visible by Ninio and Bruner's categorisation. For example, they observe that the likelihood of the child in their study repeating a label which he has produced, is not affected by the type of positive feedback (either "imitation", yes or laughter) which he receives from the adult - nor indeed by there being any positive feedback at all, since the child's repetition rate was almost as high when there had been no positive response of any kind from the adult. Instead, they observe that while any "non-negative response" (i.e. any of the three types of positive feedback, or no response) was followed by the child repeating his utterance in 43.9% of instances, a negative response ("negation of the child's label", "offer of correct label", or both), on the other hand, "suppresses repetition to 9%".

This kind of observation misses the interactional work which is being done here, in a number of ways. I shall outline three significant points which this kind of analysis misses, illustrated by examples from my own data.⁹

The sequential implications of adult non-response

The first point relates to Ninio and Bruner's argument that, since a non-response on the part of the adult was very often followed by a further child version, it can be

⁸ Indeed, Keenan (1977: 127) takes this distinction further, to point out that imitation need not necessarily result in repetition, as the attempt to copy may be unsuccessful.

⁹ These examples are presented here for illustrative purposes, and will be treated more fully later.

claimed that the occurrence of positive feedback was not significant in its power to reinforce the child. Here, too, it can be seen that attention to interactional detail may be informative. In the data collected for the present study, a child's labels are almost always followed by some kind of adult receipt. Where this is not the case, the child, on the basis of this expectation of an adult receipt, may draw from such an absence warrant for treating her or his labelling utterance as having been in some way problematic, and may, in next turn, effect on that label repair of some kind. This outcome is illustrated in the following sequence:

- (1) (TT)
- | | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | adult: | ((whispered)) <u>ca:t</u> = |
| 2 | child: | = ((whispered)) °cat° |
| 3 | | (0.5) |
| 4 | adult: | 't <u>is</u> i:' = |
| 5 | child: | = ((whispered)) <u>ca:t</u> |
| 6 | → | (1.2) |
| 7 | → child: | <u>cat</u> : |
| 8 | adult: | <u>ca:t</u> good bo:y (h) |

The child's first attempt at the label in this sequence, in the second line of the extract, is whispered¹⁰, 'latched' to the adult's whispered prompt, and also very quiet. There is good reason to suppose, then, that the adult has not heard it - an interpretation of events in accordance with the adult's second prompt after half a second - *what is it?*. The child's next attempt, in line 5, is also whispered and latched to the adult's turn - but it is substantially louder, clearly audible on the tape, and likely to have been heard. However, it is not receipted. And after 1.2 seconds the child seems to address this absence by making a further attempt at the label. There are some small changes in the articulatory phonetics¹¹ of this turn in comparison with his previous

¹⁰*Whispered* is being used here in a non-technical sense, to refer to a property of the delivery of the entire utterance. In the technical phonetic sense of the term, only the vocalic portion of the utterance is produced with 'whispered' phonation.

¹¹Throughout this study, a distinction is drawn between *articulatory* and *prosodic* phonetic properties of the talk. Prosodic phonetic properties include phonatory and initiatory features (such as pitch, stress and loudness phenomena), and also features of tempo and rhythm. In traditional linguistic

one, but the most striking difference between the two is a phonatory one: the later version has a voiced rather than a whispered vocalic portion. The adult's failure to receipt after the child's whispered version may well be the prompt which motivates the child to treat his earlier turn as having been problematic, to locate the problem in the fact that the turn was whispered, and to effect repair by producing a non-whispered version. It may be noticed, too, that the non-whispered version is receipted and affirmed by the adult (*cat good boy*), in line 8. The absence of an adult response, then, far from being irrelevant to the child's subsequent behaviour, may of itself project a repaired attempt by the child, because of an expectability of a certain kind of response which is set up by the design of these sequences.¹²

The multifunctionality of repetition

The second point to be illustrated, which the analysis of Ninio and Bruner fails to capture, concerns the multifunctionality (in interactional terms) of adult repetitions of child utterances. In my data, some forms of adult repetition of a child's labelling utterance close the labelling sequence, and do not result in a further version from the child. An example is the following:

- (2) (CC)
- | | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------------|
| | adult: | go:h what's ((points)) that = |
| | child: | = [bɐ:a] |
| → | adult: | <u>b:i:ke</u> ye:s |
| → | | (0.5) ((adult moves point)) |
| → | adult: | an' <u>what's</u> that |

analyses, these are often referred to as *non-segmental* or *suprasegmental* features, standing in opposition to *segmental* phenomena. These latter terms are avoided here, however, because they imply a particular (segmental) PHONOLOGICAL perspective on phonetic events which is inappropriate when no phonological analysis of the data is intended. While the terms *articulatory* and *prosodic* are not ideal (some phonatory features such as voice/voicelessness, for instance, may be most appropriately included under the umbrella term *articulatory*; and *prosodic*, although widely used in linguistics, tends to have a rather vague specification), these terms nonetheless avoid the danger of adopting a pseudo-phonological stance. For the same reasons, care has been taken throughout the analysis to describe phonetic events, wherever possible, in non-segmental terms.

¹²McHoul (1978: 190) has, with similar sequences, demonstrated the expectability of an acknowledgement turn in 'instructional' sequences in the classroom.

Other adult repetitions, by contrast, are followed by a second labelling attempt from the child. An example is extract (3):

- (3) (TT)
- child:

[t̥ʰa dɪ.ə θ]
- adult:

tee:th
- child:

[t̥i:jəʰ]

Various design features of these adult turns (the occurrence of *yes* and certain prosodic characteristics) can be seen to distinguish, in the data corpus, a class of adult repetitions which are often followed by a further child version, and a class of adult repetitions which are not. What is more, certain repetitions are displayed by the adult to elicit a further version from the child, while others are displayed not to do this work. Consider the following sequence:

- (4) (TT)
- adult:

°queue:n°
- (.)
- child:

[ɹ̥ʰiːn]
- (1.2)
- adult:

°queue:n°
- yeah
- adult:

say it

Here the adult's repetition of the child's label is met with a *yeah* response from the child, rather than a further version of the label. But there is evidence in the adult's follow up turn, *say it*, that this response is being treated as inadequate, and that the adult's earlier turn, the repetition, was in fact designed to elicit just such a saying from the child. By contrast, in cases where the adult can be seen to be orienting immediately to a next picture following her or his repetition turn, we can assume that the repetition is not designed to elicit a further turn from the child:

(5) (CC)

child: $\underbrace{[\xi : ^{\circ}q]}_{\rho}$
adult: ra:ke ye:s
(.)
→ adult: an' what's that

In other words, there are phonetic and other structural features which distinguish different forms of adult repetitions of a child's label, and by close examination of the interactional context of their occurrence, we can also identify how these are associated with different kinds of interactional work. Ninio and Bruner give neither the phonetic nor the interactional detail required to allow such an analysis to be carried out on their data.

Correction

The final point to be touched on here concerns the way in which Ninio and Bruner handle the notion of correction. With regard to the ways in which "negative feedback" from the adult "suppresses" repetition by the child, Ninio and Bruner distinguish three types of correction - negation of the child's label, an offer of the correct label, and both. There is no discussion of the precise distinctions between these different devices, or of the sequential implications of such choices: it is simply observed that after one of these turn types, the child rarely repeated his corrected label. Now, the first of these three turn types, "negation of the child's label", is not in any accurate sense a kind of correction at all, since this is precisely what such a turn does not do. Instead, a turn of the form *no it's not x* WITHHOLDS correction since it does not supply the target label. Indeed it may well, by contrast, invite the child to self-correct. Similarly, a turn which DOES correct by supplying the target may well present such a correction as a model, for the child to imitate. It, too, may well have certain closely-specified sequential implications. The fine details, then, of the way in which repair is collaboratively managed by the two participants, are crucial to an

understanding of the structure of these sequences, but are passed over in Ninio and Bruner's analysis. These details are central to the concerns of this study, and particularly to the analysis presented in Chapter Four.

Concluding remarks

The work of Ninio and Bruner, then, (and the later work of Ninio), is informative in outlining some of the structural properties of picture book labelling sequences, and particularly in highlighting the pedagogic nature of this kind of interaction. However, as I have started to demonstrate here, and as will be illustrated more substantially in the remainder of this chapter, there are important interactional details which are missed by the kind of statistical analysis which underpins their work. This is because the quantificational approach which they take to their data relies on a categorisation which is not ecologically warranted, but rather imposed on the data from without. These interactional details, which may only be captured by an in-depth qualitative linguistic investigation, are crucial to a true understanding of the part played by the interaction surrounding picture book labelling in the development of the child's linguistic skills. It is to the uncovering of some of these details that this chapter is directed.

The main body of this chapter, section 3.4, is concerned with a detailed, systematic investigation into the design of the labelling sequences in the corpus. As a preliminary to that investigation, the following section presents a brief overview of the general format of the sequences under scrutiny. This overview has two principal objectives - to orient the reader in preparation for the more detailed analysis of these sequences which occupies the remainder of this chapter; and to present a rationale for the direction to be taken in the analysis of specific features of the picture book data in Chapters Four and Five.

A much more common kind of lexical test occurs when the child is required to produce a label in response to a picture. (These sequences correspond to those identified by Ninio (1983) in which the child gives a "productive" response.) In their basic format, these sequences are initiated by the adult who elicits a response by directing the child's attention to the picture and asking for a label, as in the following example:

(7) (TA)

adult : ·hhh o::h what's that
child : i:sland
adult : there's i:sland 'n' the:re's the-

Sometimes, however, the child initiates the sequence of talk about a particular label by uttering a label in response to seeing the picture:

(8) (TT)

adult : elepha:n:t good bo:y
 (1.0) ((sound of
 turning pages))
→ child : fi:sh
adult : fi:sh

Here the child's 'initiation' is not to be seen as a genuine OPENING. Rather, the routine of the picture book setting allows the child to produce a label here as an appropriate action in a sequence of familiar actions (*elicitation* , *label* , *receipt*). One may very well want to suggest that, within the confines of this closely structured routine, orientation to a next picture on the page, whether directed by the other participant or self-directed, is itself tantamount to an elicitation.¹³ In both cases, whether the label has been vocally elicited by the adult or not, the child's labelling attempt can be seen

¹³A parallel may be drawn here with the way in which a telephone ringing has been identified as a kind of summons (Schegloff 1972), so that a first speaker on picking up the receiver is not initiating but responding.

to be a display of lexical knowledge - to be presented as such and, as will be later demonstrated, treated as such by the adult. The activity of labelling, then, has something of the character of a game, which is engaged in by the two participants in accordance with certain pre-defined expectations or rules.

Thus far, these sequences have much in common with the kind of three-part 'instructional' (Mehan 1979; McHoul 1978; Drew 1981) or 'pedagogic' (Heritage 1984a) sequence which has been identified as characteristic of the classroom, where a child's response to an adult's question is typically receipted by the adult in third turn position. The following extract exemplifies the basic three-part structure of these sequences:

- (9) (TA)
- | | | |
|----|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1→ | adult: | wh <u>a</u> :t:'s: th <u>a</u> t |
| | | (1.8) |
| 2→ | child: | <u>e</u> :l <u>e</u> phant = |
| 3→ | adult: | = (hh) 'a:t's ri:ght |

The three parts of the sequence are an *elicitation* from the adult, a *label* from the child, and a *receipt* from the adult.¹⁴ The adult's eliciting questions can, by virtue of this particular three-part structure, be identified as being of the 'exam' rather than the 'real' type (Heritage 1984a: 284). That is to say, they are questions to which the adult already has the answer available. What is demonstrated by extract (8) above, however, is that in the sequences under consideration here, these eliciting questions can be subject to a kind of ellipsis, by virtue of the predictability of the labelling routine.

Picture book labelling sequences also go beyond testing the child's lexical knowledge. An important feature of their format is that, at some stage within them, the adult may

¹⁴By virtue of this three-part structure, these sequences also bear similarities to the kind of 'testing' sequence identified by Marlaire and Maynard (1990).

produce a version of the appropriate label for the child to copy. An example is the following:

(10) (CC)

adult : an' what's that
 (1.4)
 child : [ʊə:w:]
 → adult : l:a:wnmower
 (.)
 child : [ə p:h]

And some sequences are opened by the adult producing a label her- or himself. This was the case in extract (4), the opening of which is reproduced below:

(11) (TT)

adult : good boy ((sound of turning
 pages))
 (1.2)
 → adult : °quee:n°
 (.)
 child : [ʔ_ɪ ã_n]

In both cases, whether the adult's label occurs in mid-sequence or opens it, the child responds to the adult label by producing a version of it. Here the task facing the child is a different one - not this time invoking lexical knowledge, but requiring the ability to imitate a model and display articulatory skills. Ninio (1983), dealing only with aspects of joint book reading which relate to vocabulary acquisition, regards sequences such as these as invoking the child's "imitative vocabulary". It is true that this kind of rehearsal is very likely to be an important step in the child's acquisition of lexical knowledge: this process of adult demonstration and child practice is just one aspect of the pedagogic nature of this kind of interaction. However, the skills which are involved in such a task for the child are phonetic rather than lexical ones. It is

also on a phonetic level that any subsequent work on a child's utterance of this kind will be carried out, as will be explored in Chapter Five.

Picture labelling, then, explicitly requires a display of two kinds of linguistic ability from the child - knowledge of lexical items (and how to match them appropriately to pictorial referents), and phonetic skill - disregarding, for now, the various linguistic and interactional skills IMPLICIT to participating in the activity of labelling. And as this is a pedagogic routine, this is also an environment in which these two kinds of skills can be demonstrably WORKED ON. While, to some extent, the adult's part in this kind of interaction can be seen to be to test the child's knowledge, there is a major difference between this kind of talk and that described by Marlaire and Maynard (1990) as characteristic of standardised testing situations. While the testing interaction has a three-part structure similar to that of pedagogic sequences, the third part in that structure is rather different across the two kinds of talk. In the testing situation, what is often found in third position in sequence is a receipt which acknowledges the testee's response but which doesn't give any evaluative feedback on that response (Marlaire and Maynard 1990:98). In picture book talk, by contrast, as in other pedagogic routines, explicit evaluative feedback on a child's label is a part of the talk's structural design. An adult's third position receipt can do at least two different things. It can indicate the acceptability of a child's label, as in extract (12):

(12) (CC)

```
adult :    ʊo:h what's that ((points))
              (0.5)
child :    [e:ʔ]
→ adult :    spa:de that's right
```

Or it can indicate an inadequacy:

(13) (TA)

child : [n^h v^h ě h]
→ adult : noah no tha:t's not norah tha:t's
n::o:ah

What is more, when the child's label is deemed to be, for whatever reason, inadequate, procedures exist through which the issue can be pursued until a satisfactory label is elicited. These procedures will be outlined in some detail in this and the following two chapters.

3.3.ii An Approach To Analysis

Given that two particular kinds of linguistic ability are being called upon and displayed in these sequences, and given that the pedagogic nature of picture book talk provides the tools for reparative work to be enacted, collaboratively, on those abilities as they are brought into the limelight, two interesting areas for exploration concerning each kind of linguistic skill suggest themselves. On the one hand it will be informative to establish just when and how repair work is enacted on both lexical and phonetic issues in the child's talk. In Chapters Four and Five, consideration will be given to ways in which this repair work can be seen to differ from certain forms of repair documented for talk between adults. And, conversely, it will also be informative to establish when, and how, repair work is NOT initiated on this talk, and how a child may be led to perceive that her or his contribution is being treated as adequate. In addition, consideration will be given to some of the ways in which work on the two areas of skill interacts.

If these sequences are built to display, first and foremost, the child's lexical knowledge, then one approach to take in considering them is to investigate ways in which the adult, as competent speaker of the language, manages her or his part in effecting that display. From this perspective, we can observe that a primary task facing the adult engaged in this kind of interaction is to get the child to utter an

appropriate label. This leaves a number of possible situations which the adult may have to deal with, after producing an elicitation:-

- (a) The child fails to respond
- (b) The child's response is not a label
- (c) The child's response is not an appropriate label
- (d) The child's response is an appropriate label, inadequately articulated
- (e) The child's response is an appropriate label, adequately articulated.

The analysis presented in this and the following two chapters will focus systematically on the ways in which the child's actions are worked on in these various circumstances. The states of affairs identified under (a) and (b) above - where the child either fails to respond to an adult's eliciting move, or responds with an utterance or action which is not treated as constituting a labelling move (does not conform to the rules of the labelling game) - will be examined later in this chapter. The analysis presented here, then, focusses on the ways in which labelling sequences are structured in order to elicit a label which may subsequently be worked on. Chapter Four, which is concerned with the work which is enacted on lexical issues in the child's talk, will be addressed both to the situation presented under (c), where the child produces a labelling utterance which is lexically problematic, and to its obverse - at ways in which a child's choice of label is displayed to be acceptable. Chapter Five will deal with work on phonetic issues, and will be concerned with the management of the circumstances outlined under (d) and (e). That is, consideration will be given, firstly, to the means by which phonetic repair is enacted on the child's labelling articulations, and secondly, to the resources available to the adult for displaying that a child's phonetic productions are being treated as acceptable.

The following section, addressed to detailing the design of labelling sequences, looks in turn at those sequences which are initiated by the adult, and those initiated by the

child. Various kinds of adult elicitations are identified:- those which employ a WH-question; those which require the child to 'fill-the-blank'; and those which present the target label to the child. The remedial strategies employed when an adult elicitation fails are also considered. Finally, attention is drawn to the design of those labelling sequences which are elicited by the child.

3.4 THE DESIGN OF LABELLING SEQUENCES

Labelling sequences are sometimes initiated by the adult, and sometimes by the child. In the corpus, 59 of the 100 labelling sequences are initiated by the adult, and 34 are initiated by the child, while two are opened simultaneously by adult and child. In the remaining five cases (on the audio tapes) the sequence has a child vocalisation at its opening which is indeterminate as to whether or not it is a label or other utterance identifiable as initiating a labelling sequence. Both adult and child initiations occur on all four of the recordings in which picture book labelling occurs.

3.4.i Adult Initiated Sequences

In this subsection, three distinct designs of the turns by which the adult elicits labelling from the child are considered.

WH-questions

The most common kind of adult initiation in these sequences is an elicitation structured as a direct WH-question (*what's that?*, *who's this?*, *'t 're those?*, *who's that*, *what's this?* etc.). 46 of the 59 adult initiations in the corpus are of this kind. A typical example is (14), which represents the opening of extract (9):

(14) (TA)

→ adult : wha:t:'s: that

(1.8)

child : e:lephant

As well as explicitly requesting a label from the child, these questions may also be serving to draw the child's attention to the picture which the adult is orienting to (and are often, on the video recording, accompanied by a point). In only three cases does anything follow the basic WH-question in the adult's turn. In the following two instances, a deictic *here* further locates the referent and draws the child's attention to it.

(15) (TA)

adult : what- 'n' what 're the:se he:re

(16) (CC)

adult : ·mhh ((moves point)) 'n' what's
'is one he:re

And in just one instance the WH-question is supplemented by a clause, *what mammy uses*, which gives a clue to the child which may help her in retrieving the label:

(17) (CC)

adult : ooh an' wha:t's that what
mammy u:ses

All other WH-question elicitation are given without clues or further information for the child. But, as extract (17) illustrates, the question may be PREFACED by other features in the turn. The two kinds of prefaces illustrated by this example - the use of *ooh* and the use of *and* - are frequent in the corpus and worthy of further attention.

***Oh* prefaces to WH-questions**

In many instances in the corpus, an eliciting question is prefaced by *oh*, *ooh*, or an exaggerated inbreath (that is, a turbulent inbreath of long duration with open vocalic

resonance) in the adult's turn. Almost half the WH-question elicitations are prefaced in this way. Some further examples are the following:

(18) (TA)

adult : o::h 'n' who's that

(19) (CC)

adult : ·hhh (.) what's tha:t

These *oh* prefaces can be seen to be accomplishing at least two kinds of interactional work. In the following extract, the occurrence of this kind of preface appears to be associated with an orientation on the adult's part to a potentially problematic labelling sequence:

(20) (TT)

→ adult : {oo} :h what's that

child : { () }

(0.6)

adult : umbrella

(1.1)

child : $[k^*_{\downarrow \Lambda}] =$

adult : = say brolly

(.)

child : $\underbrace{[b^{\frac{3}{4}} i]}_{p.}$

adult : ·h that's ea(h)sier i'n't it

In this extract, other features suggest that the adult may be indicating that a label is coming up which the child may be expected to have difficulty with. For instance, after only a relatively short pause with no response from the child (0.6 seconds) she prompts with an utterance of the required label, *umbrella*. In face of still no response from the child, she prompts again after a further 1.1 seconds, almost simultaneously with a whispered vocalisation from the child. This second prompt, *say brolly*, not

only changes the target label from *umbrella* to *brolly*, it also gives an explicit direction to the child as to what is required of him. Following a successful outcome to this prompt (a version of *brolly* from the child) the adult provides an account for her second prompt which changed the target - *that's easier i'n't it*. In this sequence, then, there are a number of indications that the adult is orienting to an anticipated difficulty in what the child is being faced with, and it may well be that her opening *ooh* is signalling just this kind of orientation.

This interpretation is supported by the following extract, where the adult opens a labelling sequence with an *ooh* vocalisation which is unsupported by any other kind of elicitation (such as a WH-question) in the turn:

- (21) (TT)
- adult : oo::h (h)
(0.5)
- child : oo::h
(1.0)
- child : ((laughter))
(0.5)
- adult : that's a vol:ca:no I don't think
you can sa:y that can you
(0.4)
- child : [k^h₊ e₊:₊ ã₊ ɲ₊:₊ ð̃₊ · ð̃₊]
(.)
- adult : vol:ca:no:
- child : [ɸ:₊ ə₊ γ]
(1.5)
- adult : can thomas say it
(0.5)
- child : [i₊ · n₊ p₊ · ə]
- adult : ·hh volca:no
- child : [ə ə^ɸ]
_{p.}
- adult : n:o it's 'a:rd ·hh

(.)

adult : is that daddy's °wa:tch°(h)

The adult's opening *ooh* in this sequence stands in place of a more typical elicitation. In a later turn, the adult produces the target label herself (*that's a volcano*), in a format which builds the utterance as an *informing*¹⁵, and directly expresses her belief that the child may be unable to produce it (*I don't think you can say that can you*). Indeed, the child passes over a number of opportunities, between these two adult turns, in which he could have produced the label. Once again, then, there is evidence that one of the functions of *ooh* in these sequences is to signal that a potentially problematic labelling task is upcoming.

A second accomplishment of these prefaces is that they play a part in directing the child's attention to the task at hand. Heritage (1984b) has reported in detail on some of the work accomplished by *oh* in conversation, suggesting that it is used "to propose that its producer has undergone some kind of change in his or her locally current state of knowledge, information, orientation or awareness" (299). In light of this, it would seem feasible to suggest that *oh*, when prefacing a WH-question in the picture book setting, may be proposing a noticing or an orientation to a new picture on the part of the adult. However, examples like the following suggest that the 'noticing' is not a genuine one:

(22) (SO)

adult :	orang:e°yes°[ə:h:]right wh(at's
	$\begin{array}{c} \text{↑} \\ \text{ingressive} \end{array}$ $\begin{array}{c} \text{↓} \\ \text{whispered} \end{array}$
child :	{ [²ëh]
adult :	[h:↓] what's that

¹⁵It is notable that the child never produces a label in a 'that's an x' or 'it's an x' format. This kind of 'informing' is used by the adult in certain sequential positions, which will be detailed below.

The sequence is initiated by an adult turn which receipts a prior label (*orange yes*), and opens a new labelling issue with an ingressive breathy central vocalic utterance, followed by a whispered *right*, and the beginning of an eliciting question, *what's*. The adult breaks off this question in face of the child's short, incursive vocalisation. After the child's vocalisation, she redoes the question, prefacing it once more with an inbreath with slightly more open vocalic resonance. This second inbreath cannot be seen as proposing a noticing or new orientation by the adult, as it accompanies a second attempt at elicitation from the same picture.

A similar case is the following, where the adult's *ooh* is itself prefaced by another object, *look*:

(23) (SO)

	child :	({)
	adult :		{	let's turn over
			(0.7)	((sound of pages))
	child :	({)
	adult :		{	>and see what there is<
				on <u>this</u> page
			(1.1)	
	child :		n:q::	
→	adult :		y:ea::	look ooh (.) <u>what's</u> that

Here, the adult has already displayed an orientation to the page in question (*let's turn over and see what there is on this page*), and has further directed the child's attention with a short and high-pitched *look*. Her *ooh* is thus NOT signalling a new orientation for her.

However, one reason why one might appear to propose a noticing or a change in orientation, in talk, is to effect such a change in one's co-participant. To vocally notice something, is to draw another's attention to that object. One may then AFFECT a noticing in order to do just that - to direct another's attention. Vocalisations such as

oh, *ooh*, and protracted inbreaths in this data are displayed to be 'mock noticings', as they can be recycled, as in extract (22), when an interrupted turn is recycled. A contrast can be drawn between this kind of recycling and the way in which an elicitation may be reformulated in face of an absence of response from the child. In (22), the adult, by redoing the inbreath preface, builds her second turn as a re-beginning, opening anew the labelling issue after an interruption. After a failure to respond from the child, on the other hand, a second elicitation is built rather differently, as the following sequence illustrates:

(24) (CC)

adult : ooh ((points)) what's that

(2.8) ((child moves

about in chair))

→ adult : what is it

Here there is no repetition of the *ooh* in the adult's second turn, *what is it?*. Instead, *is* is expanded and given prominence (with high rising pitch), and the original deictic *that* is replaced by an anaphoric *it*. In other words, the adult's second turn, omitting the mock noticing, is built, not as a recycling of an initiation, but as a follow-up question.

And prefaces to WH-questions

Extract (17) cited earlier demonstrated, in addition to the use of an *oh* preface, a second recurrent feature of the design of WH-question elicitations in the data: these questions are also often prefaced by *and*. Some further examples are the following:

(25) (CC)

adult : and what's that

(26) (CC)

adult : 'n' what's tha:t

There is a further way in which the occurrence of *and* in such turns may help to elucidate for the child the expectations set up by the picture book routine. Very often the adult's *what's that?* question is tacked onto an utterance giving feedback on the previous label, so that the adult's turn consists of a confirmation like *yes*, *label+yes* or *that's right*, and a next elicitation. In other words, parts 3 and 1 of the three-part sequence - *elicitation* , *label* , *receipt* - occur in the same turn. In such cases the link between the two parts is very often made with *and*:

(28) (CC)

adult : ta:ble yea 'n' ((points)) what's
 that

(29) (CC)

adult : tha:t's it 'n' ((points)) what's
 tha:t

This kind of turn displays that a series of labelling sequences can, at its barest, consist of a recurrent cycle of those three parts, with no intervening talk between part 3 of one sequence and part 1 of the next. It displays that as a structural feature of these sequences which we as analysts can make note of - and it also, crucially, displays it to the child. From this adjoining of receipt and next elicitation within a single turn, the child may infer that no further turn or fourth part to the sequence is expected on her or his part, after the adult's receipt. Indeed, in the examples above, there is no opportunity for such a fourth part.

At times, however, there is just such an opportunity for a further child action between the receipt of one label and the elicitation of the next. Sometimes, because of the

that this kind of reduction is abandoned by the tester as soon as the child displays hesitancy in response.

need to turn the page or move to a next picture, there will be a temporal gap between receipt and elicitation:

(30) (CC)

adult : bath (heh)'a(h)t's i(h)t
 ((turning page))

→ (0.5) ((adult turns page))

adult : and what's that ((points))

In a case like this, it may be that the *and* preface to the adult's elicitation has some particularly important work to do. As well as building the elicitation into one of a series, it can retrospectively display that elicitation to have been sequentially next to the receipt which preceded the 0.5 second silence. That is, the adult's *and* can provide a warrant for that silence, and can designate it as not having been any kind of accountable absence.

'Fill-the-blank' elicitations

A second elicitation strategy, much less used by the adults in the corpus than WH-questions, consists of presenting a 'fill-the-blank' task to the child. Just three of the 100 sequences are initiated in this way. The adult's utterance is syntactically incomplete, slows in tempo, and terminates on high or mid, level or rising pitch. In this way it prosodically, as well as syntactically, leaves a 'space', inviting completion by the child:

(31) (TA)

adult : that's a man cow and thaa:t's
 a-

(.)

child : [b^o_r u: k^h p.^v]

(32) (TA)

adult : there's i:sland 'n' the:re's the-
(1.2)

(33) (TT)

adult : and a
(0.7)

A similar technique is used in other, non-labelling sequences which occur in the course of picture book interactions, where the adult intersperses bouts of labelling activity with reading the text of the book's story. One aspect of the story reading activity taking place on one recording, for example, consists of a testing of the child's memory of the text, using the same kind of fill-the-blank format:

(34) (TA)

→ adult : ((click)) ·hh (h)all the anima:ls
→ were cro:wded into the:
(0.5)
child : y:ark
(.)
adult : and it ra:ined and rained and
 rained...

This kind of activity is rather different from true labelling - both in that it is testing a different ability in the child (that of reciting memorised pieces of text) and in the way in which the sequences are designed. For instance, when the child fails to fill the blank the adult can do so herself and continue the story, without pursuing a response from the child:

(35) (TA)

adult : 'n' rhinoceros s:n:q:rted at
(0.5)

→ adult : f:rog
 (0.8)
 adult : w {ho:}
 child : {uh } ·h norah ·h norah

The 0.8 second silence after the adult's turn, certainly gives the child an opportunity to produce a version of *frog* - but there is no demonstration of an expectation from the adult of this kind of child turn. By contrast, in labelling (fill-the-blank labelling being no exception) a label elicitation is routinely pursued to child response of some kind - and very often to a highly specific kind of child response. The sequence opened in extract (32) above, which is extended in (36) below, will serve as an example of fill-the-blank labelling where the adult shows this kind of propensity to pursue a child label over a number of turns. The precise ways in which this repeated elicitation is conducted will be examined in more detail later. Here, I simply wish to draw a contrast between this phenomenon and the rather lower level of demand placed on the child when a fill-the-blank option is 'dropped', in a sequence like (35).

(36) (TA)

adult : there's i:sland 'n' the:re's the-
 (1.2)
 → adult : what's tha:t
 → (0.5)
 child : (())
 adult : {it's the} s:un (.)
 {sun }shi:ne
 child : {°()°}
 → (1.0)
 child : what's this

Sequences like (34) and (35), then, because they are not constructed as displays of lexical knowledge, have been omitted from the corpus of labelling sequences. Only when a textual fill-the-blank sequence is transformed into an elicitation of such a

display, as in (37) below, can this kind of a sequence be considered as concerned with true labelling:

- (37) (TA)
- adult : s:quea:ked at rabbit
- (0.9)
- adult : who: sque:a:led a:t (.) who's
- this
- (1.5)
- child : rhi:noceros

Indeed, such an example may well indicate the low level of demand that this kind of option places on the child. The adult's backing up of a fill-the-blank utterance with an eliciting WH-question, before any perceptible absence of response from the child, may very well orient to a differential strength in the two kinds of elicitation.

Adult labelling

A final means of adult elicitation to be considered here concerns a class of cases where the adult initiates a labelling sequence by providing the target label in some way. Extract (6), cited in subsection 3.3.i, incorporates an adult utterance of the label in the eliciting turn, and requires the child to locate its referent, rather than to provide the label:

- (6) (TA)
- adult : ri:ght: who can we see ·hhh
- (.)
- adult : where's the kangaroo (hhh)
- (1.6) ((sound of tapping on page?))
- adult : °the:re that's right° (.)·hh a:nd
- what's that

This kind of sequence, then, is testing a different kind of knowledge. Apart from (6), there are just six cases in the corpus where the adult initiates a sequence by supplying the target label. An example is (4), also cited earlier:

- (4) (TT)
 → adult: °queue:n°
 (.)
 child: [ʔ⁹i_ɪñ] (1.2)
 adult: °queue:n°
 child: yeah
 adult: say it

One might well question why an adult should initiate a labelling sequence with a label, since such an action preempts the child from displaying lexical knowledge. However, there may be occasions when the adult, instead of requiring such a display, orients to a particular label's capacity to present difficulty to the child. Some of the books being used in this data are sequential, one-picture-a-page books, (for example, the alphabetic book being looked at in TA) which give little opportunity to the adult for being selective over which pictures the child is required to label. One way, then, for the adult to withhold a potentially problematic labelling task from the child, is to label the picture her- or himself. This interpretation of such sequences is supported by the finding of Ninio (1983) that when a label had displayed difficulty for the child in her data (by resulting in a wrong response, or absence of response following elicitation), a second occurrence of that same label was significantly more likely to be elicited by an adult label than by an eliciting question.¹⁸

¹⁸Ninio gives no indication whether any kind of rehearsal has occurred following the child's wrong response. As will be demonstrated, such rehearsal is common in my data. One might suppose that after overt 'training' of this kind the adult might, on a further occurrence of that label, elicit a first production from the child. Unfortunately, there are no second occurrences of labels of this kind in my data.

To begin to illustrate the feasibility of this interpretation, it can be noted that there are other indications that the adult can build an initiating turn to orient to potential difficulty on the part of the child. It has already been suggested that the adult's use of *ooh* in (21) served to introduce an upcoming 'difficult' label:

- (21) (TT)
- adult : oo::h (h)
(0.5)
- child : oo::h
(1.0)
- child : ((laughter))
(0.5)
- adult : that's a vol:ca:no I don't think
you can sa:y that can you
(0.4)
- child : [k^h₊ e:₊ ð̃₊ ŋ:₊ ð̃₊ ð̃₊]
(.)
- adult : vol:ca:no:
- child : [p:₊ ə₊ γ]
(1.5)
- adult : can thomas say it
(0.5)
- child : [j:₊ n₊ p:₊ θ]
adult : ·hh volca:no
- child : [əθ^h]
ρ.
- adult : n:o it's 'a:rd ·hh
(.)
- adult : is that daddy's °wa:tch°(h)

Clearly, the adult's second turn here is built expressly to address her doubt in the child's capacity to supply the appropriate label - both by stating that doubt (*I don't think you can say that can you*), and by providing the label in an utterance built as an

informing (*that's a volcano*). In the following extract, the adult initiates the sequence with a turn which queries the child's capacity to label:

- (38) (TA)
→ adult : can you remember what tha:t is
(0.8)
child : ·h how's that is:
(.)
adult : it's (.) po:rcu:pi:ne

One candidate response to a question like *can you remember what that is?*, occurring as it does in a series of label-eliciting initiations, would be a production of the label. In the following sequence, for example, a sequence is initiated with a similar question:

- (39) (TT)
→ adult : (you) tell mummy what tha:t is(h)
→ child : apple
(.)
adult : a:ppl:e good bo:y

The child responds with a label, which is receipted by the adult. This receipt indicates that a label in this position is accepted as an appropriate response.¹⁹ But such a question also gives the child the option of NOT producing a label, and of doing so without failing the expectations of the sequence. The child's response in (38), which is not a label, can therefore be treated as implying a negative answer to the question *can you remember what that is?*, and no further opportunities for remembering the label are given him. The adult, with very little delay, provides the label, *it's porcupine*, again in a turn built as an informing.

¹⁹While (39) has features consistent with an adult orientation to potential child difficulty, it should be noted that this is the opening sequence of a book reading session, and may be built rather differently from subsequent sequences because it has particular interactional work to do - i.e. clarifying for the child the activity which is being embarked upon.

Similar adult utterances were recorded by Ninio and Bruner (1978:10), where the adult expressed certain expectations concerning the child's ability to label; for example,

You haven't seen one of those; that's a goose.

You don't really know what those are, do you, they are mittens; wrong time of year for those.

Whether or not these utterances occurred in sequence-initial position, however, is not indicated in their report.

There are ways, then, in which the adult engaged in picture book reading with a young child can adapt the task in certain ways, managing to continue the series of labelling sequences instigated by the pictures in front of them, while selectively withholding the onus of supplying the label from the child on certain occasions. And one way of doing this is to initiate a sequence with a labelling utterance. Some further examples will show how the demands which this particular design of initiation makes on the child's language abilities are different from what is required when a sequence is initiated with a WH-question or 'fill-the-blank' elicitation.

In the following extract, the participants are concluding a bout of labelling from an alphabetic picture book. Just prior to this sequence, there has been a lengthy attempt by the adult to get the child to produce an adequate version of *watch*. The child has been sidetracked into other vocalisations, and at the opening of this sequence, the adult returns to an utterance of *watch* (for which there still, at this point, has not been an adequate child rendition):

adult : w:a:tch
 (0.6)

child : [$\underset{+}{v} \underset{-}{e} \cdot \overset{\circ}{\wedge} \cdot \overset{?}{t} \underset{-}{s}$]
 (1.2)

→ adult : [≠] an' a x:-r:a:y
 (1.1)

child : [j^I d̃:ẽ]
 (.)

→ adult : and a yacht:
 (0.7)

child : [h \check{e} :e²]

The adult's use of a rising pitch contour on her productions of the target labels in this sequence, and her use of *and* to link them, combine to give this sequence the character of a list. Whether because the child has displayed such difficulty with the previous label, or because the adult is concerned to move quickly to the end of the book in the face of the child's waning attention, or because the adult recognises these to be difficult/unfamiliar words for the child - she does not require the child to find these labels. And it is at least consistent with a sensitivity to their being unfamiliar labels that the adult does no work on the child's renditions: she presses for no improvement.²⁰ What is significant, however, is that the child does produce a version of each of the labels, in repeat of the adult. This means that when the adult initiates a sequence with a label, the child is saved from undertaking a lexical task, but required instead to participate in a copying, articulatory task. This requirement is made plain in the design of the adult's initiation in the following sequence:

(41) (TT)

→ adult : say in:se:ct

child : 'se:ct

(2.0) ((sound of pages))

²⁰This is in contrast to many sequences, which will be examined in detail in Chapter Five, in which extensive work is pursued on the child's articulations.

child : ju:g

Again, the choice of this format may orient to some expectation on the part of the adult that the child is unable to produce this label first off. And again, consistent with this, it can be noted that no work is pursued on the child's version. But what is required of the child is to rehearse a production of the label, after the adult. It seems plausible, then, that instances where the adult initiates with a production of the label are instances where, for some reason, she or he does not wish to require the child to find a label - and that this is likely to occur where it is suspected that the child does not have the required knowledge available. The ways in which these sequences require the child to imitate, to display just-acquired knowledge or to rehearse articulatory skills, will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Summary and further remarks

It may be useful at this point to summarise the different options which have been seen to be available to the adult for initiating labelling sequences. The fact that the basic and most common strategy is a direct WH-question eliciting a label from the child, displays these sequences to be built, first and foremost, as tests of the child's lexical knowledge. While the "attentional vocative" *look*, identified by Ninio and Bruner (1978) is largely absent from my data, the child's attention to the referent, and to the task at hand, can be directed by pointing and by 'mock' noticing/exclamation markers. The three-part structure of these sequences is reinforced and displayed to the child when eliciting questions are tacked onto the back of an affirmation of a previous label, and when they are prefaced by *and*. The way in which the activity of labelling is thus structured as a series of recurrent actions lends coherence to those actions within the 'labelling game', such that each *what's that?* elicitation is displayed to be subject to the same rules, and to carry the same expectations as those which have gone before.

A WH-question initiation, then, can be identified as the norm, and when the adult deviates from this norm, there are indications that this deviation orients to a potential difficulty on the child's part, as in (21) and (38). In only a few sequences does the adult initiate by supplying a version of the label. In this way, labelling sequences can be identified first and foremost as designed to test the child's knowledge, rather than to impart new knowledge. In these recordings the books which are being attended to are clearly familiar to the children, and so, patently, are most of the words in them. In only seven of the 100 sequences is the child given no opportunity to have first go at the label.

It is also interesting to observe how events turn out in the two instances in the corpus where both participants happen to initiate talk about a label at the same time:

(42) (SO)

	child :	[tʃh:]	
			(2.2)
	child :	·mtk ·h p{ea:	
→	adult :	{ 't's i-	
			(4.7)
	child :	()	

The adult breaks off an eliciting question (*what's this?*), which becomes redundant when the child can be heard uttering a label. Similarly, in the following sequence, the adult twice breaks off her turn in face of an overlapping utterance (and potential label) on the part of the child:

(43) (TT)

	adult :	ri:n:g	
			(2.2) ((sound of pages))
→	adult :	[ʔ] {su-}	
	child :	{ () }	
			(.)

(44) (SO)

adult : ri:gh {t
 child : {[kʰa.p e^(h)]
 (0.5)
 adult : 's look in your book what's tha:t
 → (6.1)
 child : p:ea: {()}
 adult : {pea} : ·h °yes°

A second strategy employed when elicitation is not successful, is to use a sequence of the different elicitation devices which have been identified in this section. In extract (36) a failed fill-the-blank elicitation is followed up by a WH-question:

(36) (TA)


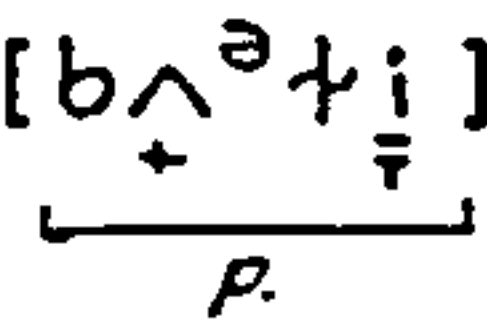
→ adult : there's i:sland 'n' the:re's the-
 → (1.2)
 → adult : wha:t's tha:t
 (0.5)
 child : ({ })
 adult : {it's the} s:un (.)
 {sun }shi:ne
 child : {°()°}
 (1.0)
 child : what's this

The adult has started with a relatively indirect elicitation strategy - a 'fill the blank' utterance. One might argue that such a device gives few clues to child as to what is required in next position. It is, at least, open to misinterpretation. The child may, for instance, hear the cut-off in the adult's turn as being motivated by some factor other than the intention to leave a space for the child to fill. When the elicitation fails, and there is no response within 1.2 seconds, the adult, rather than repeating the utterance, uses a different elicitation technique, a *what's that?* question. In face of no response from the child, then, the adult can 'step up' the directness of the elicitation, by



choosing among a variety of techniques - when one fails, using another which is more explicit. Marlaire and Maynard (1990 : 91) demonstrate how, in standardised testing interactions, an adult may respond to an absence of an answer from the child by modifying the testing prompt - and in this way orient to the possibility that it was the format of the prompt itself which was the source of trouble for the child. Similarly, a shift from a fill-the-blank elicitation to a *what's that?* question in (36) keeps alive the possibility that the child's failure to answer is due to the nature of the original elicitation.

However, this *what's that?* question also fails. After a 0.5 second silence, the child's vocalisation is a repetitive string of syllables uttered on a level pitch, having characteristics of sound play rather than of a turn addressed to the adult's initiation - and certainly not supplying the appropriate label. The adult treats this utterance as non-contingent, by breaking in in overlap (it has already been seen how the adult can, by contrast, be very sensitive to a child's overlapping talk when it is, or has the potential of being, a label). This time, she supplies the label in an informing turn, *it's the sun*. Whether this informing itself solicits a child utterance is not clearly demonstrable here, although the one second's silence following the adult's turn may well be a position for the adult in which the child could have produced his version of the label in imitation. However, a child label in such a position would have been just that - an imitation - rather than a display of lexical knowledge. It seems that, at the point at which the *what's that?* question fails to elicit a response, the adult abandons the elicitation of a display of lexical knowledge (seems to accept, that is to say, that the problem for the child is one of lack of knowledge) and, at best, solicits an imitation of an adult version of the label - in other words, solicits a display of articulatory skill. In the following three examples, a failed WH-question is followed up by an adult turn which supplies the label:


(45)²¹ (TT)

→ adult : {oo}:h what's that
 child : { () }
 → (0.6)
 → 
 → adult : umbrella
 (1.1)
 child : [k^x₊Λ] =
 adult : = say brolly
 (.)
 child : 
 adult : ·h that's ea(h)sier i'n't it

(46) (CC)

→ adult : ·hh 'n' what's that
 → (0.6)
 → child : ((turns to look at adult)) 
 → adult : ((looking at child)) ·h  coo ker

(47) (CC)

adult : ·hh- yea same as you've got in
 your box ((pointing to page)) 'n'
 → what's tha:t
 → (2.2)
 → 
 → adult : sc::isso:rs

The first of these three extracts demonstrates, though, that, even when the adult is employing a labelling utterance to seek a response from the child, there are ways of

²¹This is a reproduction of extract (20) with additional transcription of pitch.

progressing from less to more direct means of evoking that response. After a 0.6 second pause, the adult supplies the label, on rising-falling pitch which falls only to mid range, in a turn which appears to solicit a repeat from the child. When this also fails to elicit an appropriate response, the adult, in her next turn, is able to address the child's difficulty in two ways. As has already been seen, she changes the target from *umbrella* to *brolly*: but she also makes even more explicit what is required of the child: *say brolly*. Even after producing a labelling utterance, then, the adult has resources for clarifying the implications of such a turn for the child's actions.

(46) and (47) above illustrate different circumstances in which an adult may be prompted to repair an elicitation. (46) demonstrates how the child may direct attention to an inability to answer a *what's that?* question. There is a 0.6 second pause after the adult's eliciting turn, during which the child turns to look at the adult and makes a very quiet vocalisation, which seems to indicate an inability to answer. The adult, without giving further opportunity for a child attempt, provides a model of the label, articulated with rise-fall-rising pitch and with a pause between its two syllables, while looking at the child. But (47) indicates, on the other hand, in the absence of a child vocalisation or gaze to adult, that silence alone can equally prompt an adult to supply the label:

(47) (CC)

	adult :	·hh- yea same as you've got in your box ((pointing to page)) 'n' what's tha:t
→		(2.2)
		<hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 0 auto; width: 50%;"> / \ </div> <hr style="width: 100%; border: 0.5px solid black;"/>
→	adult :	sc::isso:rs

In this sequence, there is 2.2 second silence after the *what's that?* question, during which the child continues looking at the book. The adult then supplies the label, with a steep rise-fall-rise pitch contour.

The fact that when, in these examples, a WH-question fails to elicit a child response, the adult repairs by supplying the target label, suggests that the adult orients to that non-response as indicating a lack of ability on the part of the child to supply the label through not having the lexical knowledge available, rather than through having misunderstood the elicitation, since to supply a label in such a position is to preempt the child from displaying lexical knowledge. In light of this, a reconsideration of extract (24) is informative, as it highlights a further option which is not taken up in examples (36), (45), (46) and (47):

(24) (CC)

adult : ooh ((points)) what's that

(2.8) ((child moves

 about in chair))

→ adult : what is it

After a 2.8 second silence following the adult's *what's that?*, the adult takes another turn. But he does not supply a label, nor does he use a more direct elicitation. Instead, he reformulates the question to *what is it?*. As has already been suggested, the way in which this repaired elicitation is enacted, by reformulating the question and replacing deictic *that* with anaphoric *it*, suggests that he recognises the child to have registered the question (he does not, for instance, simply repeat, or recycle the question, so as to re-initiate the sequence), but is perceiving her not to be addressing it. And indeed, the child's moving about in her chair at this point may well suggest to him that she is not addressing his question (although her subsequent actions display that, after all, this movement is preparatory to her particular style of answer²²). *What is it*, in other words, is built as a second question, not as a redoing of an initiating one. It displays a location of the child's failure to answer in her not addressing the question, rather than

²²She picks up the book and, in an apparent mime of *bed*, lays it down at the edge of the table.

in not understanding it or in not having the lexical knowledge available to answer it. And it is not an option which the adult takes up in (36), (45), (46) and (47).

Thus the outcomes of a non-response to an adult's elicitation of a label are various, and different options available to the adult for repairing a failed initiation seem to differentially locate a possible trouble source for the child. Sometimes the pause between adult elicitation and child response can be long without a prompt from the adult. In (44) the adult waited 6.1 seconds for a child label, which was eventually forthcoming. In (47), 2.2 seconds of silence following a *what's that?* question were enough for the adult to prompt the child with a label. In (46), a short pause coupled with a gaze to the adult and a vocalisation secured a prompt. And in (45) the adult prompted with a very short pause - just 0.6 seconds, which is shorter than the interval in many sequences where a response is forthcoming. This kind of variability in the circumstances which preface (and may be seen to play a part in projecting) a repaired elicitation from the adult, lend weight to the suggestion that in these sequences generally the adult's actions may be guided by prior knowledge (or expectation) of the child's level of ability. Indeed, in (45), other indications are evident that the adult is orienting to a potential difficulty on the part of the child. And while the adult may, in repairing a failed elicitation, credit the child with failing either by virtue of an inexplicit elicitation (as in (36)), and repair by using a different elicitation technique, or by virtue of not paying attention to the question (as in (24)), and repair by reformulating that question - in the majority of cases, a repaired elicitation retracts from the child the requirement to label, by itself supplying the target label ((36), (45), (46), (47)). This suggests that, when a WH-question fails, the adult most commonly locates the source of trouble in the child's ABILITY to label, rather than in any other factor. And this observation, in turn, lends weight to the earlier suggestion that when the adult INITIATES a sequence with a label, she or he is also orienting to a (suspected rather than displayed) difficulty on the part of the child.

Inappropriate response

The preceding examples have illustrated one kind of failure of an adult elicitation, where that elicitation is met with non-response. Another way in which an elicitation may be said to fail is when the child's response is not deemed appropriate in one way or another. The following chapter will be concerned with the ways in which repair is carried out on lexical matters in the child's labelling talk, and will therefore look at those instances where the child's response is treated as a wrong label. Here, the focus will be on instances where the child's response is treated as inappropriate either through not being a label at all, or through not conforming to apparent expectations of what a labelling attempt should be.

A non-labelling utterance as an inappropriate response

The following is a particularly long labelling sequence, in which extensive repair work is enacted on the adult's elicitation before an acceptable child label is forthcoming.

(48) (TT)

adult :	is that <u>daddy's</u> <u>°wa:tch°</u> (h)
	(1.1)
adult :	<u>°say wa:tch°</u>
	(0.6)
child :	<u>[t'ɹæ.dɛ:ʃ]</u>
adult :	<u>what</u>
	(.)
adult :	<u>wa:tch</u>
	(0.4)
child :	<u>[nəp.ɛ:ʃ]</u>
adult :	<u>say wa:tch</u>

child : $\frac{\frac{\sim}{[t^w a: \dot{?} \cdot d \underline{\varepsilon} d \underline{\varepsilon} \cdot \varsigma]} =$

adult : $\frac{\frac{-}{= \text{daddy: 's}}$

(.)

adult : $\frac{\frac{\sim}{wa: tch}}$

(1.2)

child : $\frac{[j \underline{\varepsilon} h]}{Ap.}$ (1.6) ((sound of pages))

child : $[k^h \dot{?} \cdot Id a n \underline{\varepsilon}: t^{\theta}]$

adult : mm:m

child : $[k j^{\varepsilon} \underline{p}^h]$ (3.4)

adult : $\frac{\frac{\sim}{wa: tch}}$ (0.6) ((sound of pages))

child : $\frac{\frac{\sim}{[v \underline{p} \cdot \dot{?} \wedge \cdot \dot{?} t \underline{\varepsilon}]}}$ (1.2)

adult : $[\neq] \text{ an' a } \underline{x: -r: a: v}$

The adult's elicitation, *is that daddy's watch?* opens the sequence in a format quite different from the basic pattern which has already been outlined. Since it carries an adult utterance of the label, it is not requiring the child to find that label for himself. It is also marked in its delivery. The label at the end of the turn, *watch*, produced with a rise-fall-rise pitch contour, is articulated notably more quietly than the preceding part of the turn, and is thus set apart from the rest of the question, seeming to be marked as a prompt. This elicitation, then, comes across almost as a fill-the-blank utterance (*is that daddy's-*), with a prompting label tacked on to it. Given the uncharacteristic formulation of this turn, one might well see that the child could have problems in establishing just what is required of him following it. At face value, the

question seems to require a *yes/no* answer, and rather than operating with a generic label it is invoking the child's familiarity with a particular referent, his father's watch. Both factors are potentially a source of confusion for the child. And indeed, a 1.1 second silence following the adult's turn yields no child response. By contrast, the adult's repaired elicitation in face of this non-response, *say watch*, is unequivocal in clarifying for the child what is expected of him.²³

The child orients at least to the need for a response, and after 0.6 seconds utters a version of *daddy's*, with a rising pitch contour of level steps. The adult is thus placed in the position of hearing the child repeating a part of her utterance which supplied the label - but not the right part. The way she deals with this is with the repair initiator, *what*. This kind of repair initiation is well-documented in the literature on conversational repair (e.g. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977), and usually is regarded as being rather unspecific with regard to its power to locate the trouble source, since it carries the whole of the prior turn in its scope. Here, however, the adult's *what* comes off rather differently. It has a short fall in pitch at mid range which, juxtaposed with the rising pitch contour of the child's prior turn, seems to build that prior turn as being incomplete. This *what* is thus restricted in its scope, as it is prosodically marked as standing in, not for the whole of the child's turn, but rather for an implied gap at the end of it. That is to say, it comes off with the force of *daddy's what*. After a very brief pause the adult follows this up with a further model of the label, *watch*; and perhaps, by doing this, she addresses the inexplicit character of her prior *what* turn.

This further adult utterance of the label is successful in eliciting a child response, but again that response is not the target label, *watch*, but another version of *daddy's*. A second inappropriacy of this kind seems to call for a more direct repair technique and

²³One of the intriguing features of adult-child interaction is the way in which a turn's sequential implications may be spelled out in this way. Such instances show how interactional aspects of talk, as well as linguistic ones, are being worked on.

to motivate the adult to give, in next turn, an explicit instruction, *say watch*, spelling out to the child just what he is being required to do. The adult, then, has progressed through the child's failure to grasp, or at least to supply, what is required of him, by an increase in the directness of her prompts: (*daddy's*) *what* - *watch* - *say watch*. *Say watch* once more succeeds in eliciting a child response, and this time the child incorporates both elements of the adult's original labelling noun phrase (*daddy's watch*) but in the wrong order -*watch daddy's*. This turn is swiftly followed by a further prompt from the adult - *daddy's*. This, uttered with near level mid-range pitch (closely matching the pitch contour of this part of the child's prior turn), comes off as a fill-the-blank kind of prompt.²⁴ After only a short pause, though, the adult fills the blank herself in a further turn, *watch*.

Since the adult has filled the blank herself with this turn, the child may have good reason to suppose that nothing more is being solicited from him. And there is silence for 1.2 seconds. At this point the child appears to orient to the fact that a response is required of him, with a very quiet turn, *yeah*. The adult now drops pursuit of the label, and there is an unclear side sequence which seems to move away from labelling. When the adult returns to the task, however, rather than opening with the next label in sequence in the book, she returns to the same labelling issue, initiated with a simple label - *watch* - which is successful in eliciting an approximation from the child. This child utterance is awarded no receipt, but the adult, by moving on to the next picture and building her next elicitation as adjacent with the use of *and* (*an' a x-ray*), can at last be seen to be treating the child's contribution as adequate.

(48) is an exceptionally long labelling sequence, and it has required lengthy explication. It illustrates, to begin with, how crucial the shape of the adult's opening question can be in the expectations which it sets up for the child, and hence in the

²⁴Here is a nice example of the complex relationship which holds between the formal shape of turns at talk and the interactional work which they do. Earlier in this extract, to elicit an utterance of *watch* rather than *daddy's* from the child, the adult said *watch*. Here, again to elicit a version of *watch* rather than *daddy's*, she says *daddy's*.

outcome of the sequence. It cannot be ruled out here that the adult's elicitation, *is that daddy's watch*, has led the child to interpret the target label as *daddy's watch*, and that he is aiming at that throughout. There is evidence here, then, that for the adult to venture from the routinised format of labelling sequences can jeopardise their success in securing an appropriate label from the child. The adult's opening turn in this sequence is rather unorthodox - something of a maverick move in the labelling game - and is paid for with extensive repair.

And this sequence illustrates, further, the length to which the adult is prepared to go to elicit an appropriate child utterance. Unlike in a testing sequence (Marlaire and Maynard 1990), where an inappropriate child response may be treated for the purposes of the test as a WRONG response, be scored accordingly, and be followed directly by a next testing prompt, here the adult shows her readiness to pursue an appropriate child response over numerous turns. While this contrasts with the design of sequences characteristic of testing proper, Marlaire and Maynard also identify a kind of preliminary sequence in their data, in which adult and child engage in a rehearsal of the testing routine. These sequences can be long, involve extensive repair, and carry many of the features seen in this extract. Similarly here, the adult's protracted pursuit of an appropriate response, and her spelling out of her turns' expectations (*say watch*), give this sequence the character of a rehearsal. What this sequence illustrates, then, is the way in which the rules of the labelling game sometimes need to be explicitly taught.

Non-vocal labels as an inappropriate response

In (48), the child was picking up the wrong part of a labelling prompt, and hence, for the adult, was not technically labelling. A slightly different problematic situation which may have to be faced is where the child's response to an adult's eliciting question can be seen to be addressing the question, and may even be orienting to an identification of the referent, but is nonetheless not providing the label in what is - for

the adult at least - an appropriate way. The child in the CC recording sometimes uses makaton signs, and in the following sequence her father makes clear that one of the expectations of the labelling game is that vocal labels are required:


(49) (CC)

adult : ·hh ((moves point)) 'n' what's
 'is one he:re

child : ((signs telephone)) [R::R:]
((looks at adult))

(.)

adult : tele phone ((looking at child))

child :  [$\bar{R}:::^h$] ((not signing, looking
away, moving about in
chair))

adult : say tele{pho:ne}

$$\text{child : } \left(\begin{array}{c} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right) \left(\begin{array}{c} \text{---} \\ \text{---} \\ \text{---} \end{array} \right)$$

adult : say tele{phone for m} e

$$\text{child : } \left(\begin{array}{c} \overline{\quad\quad\quad} \\ \overline{\quad\quad\quad} \\ [\vec{R}:::\vec{R}] \end{array} \right)$$

child :

 [h↓hɐɪjɛ:] ((signing telephone))
 (.)

```
adult :      (hh)a(h)ye-(hehe) ((turning
                                page))
```

adult : 'h 'n' what's tha:t ((points))

After the adult's eliciting question the child raises her hand to the side of her head in a loose inverted fist, with her curled little finger close to her ear, and produces a voiced uvular trill with stepped level pitch while looking at her father. There can be no doubt that the child is not only addressing the question, she is also producing, appropriately, a version of *telephone*. The adult looks at the child and says *telephone*

with rise-fall-rise pitch, after which the child continues with her trill but looks away and stops signing. As in the previous extract, the adult's strategy in face of the child's failure to respond appropriately (that is, to repeat) after such a prompt, is to spell out the sequential implications of that prompt with an explicit instruction - *say telephone*. In this case in particular it may well be necessary to spell this instruction out, for it may not be at all clear to the child why her response has not been adequate. The child continues trilling, in overlap with the adult's turn, and he reformulates it - *say telephone for me* - during the course of which the child trills once more. She then signs again, and vocalises what appears to be an enacted greeting - *hi there* - at which the adult laughs, receipting the child's turn (it is not clear whether the adult's vocalisation here is the beginning of a repetition of the child's utterance, or some version of *ah yea*) and drops pursuit of a vocal label, turning the page and initiating a new labelling sequence.

One explanation for the sequence of events in this extract is that one of the unspoken rules of the labelling game is that labels must be vocalised. However, it is not always the case that this adult finds signs unacceptable labels from this child. In the following sequence, from the same book reading session, the child spontaneously labels a picture by producing a sign in front of the book:

(50) (CC)

adult : and what's that ((points))

(.)

child : [pʊɛ:ʔ]

(.)

adult : show:er

(1.0)

child : $[\theta \wedge \cdot]_{\pm}$

(0.5)

adult : sho:w e:r

(0.5) ((child signs washing
hands in front of
book))

child : $\frac{[d^v\dot{r}]}{p.}$

(0.6)

adult : yea an' that's a w:ash basin
 ((joins in signing)) that's
 right where you wash your ha:nds
 ((adult stops signing)) ye:s
 ((child stops signing))

(1.4) ((adult turns page))

adult : oo:h what's that ((points))

The adult here produces two utterances of the target label *shower*, thereby treating the child's two turns - both $[p^v\dot{r}:\dot{r}]$ in response to his eliciting question, and $[^{\circ}\wedge^{\cdot}\dot{r}]$ in response to his first *shower* - as being in some way inadequate. Following the adult's second prompt, the child orients to another picture on the page, by stretching out her hand and bunching and opening her fingers in front of the book, while making a short, very quiet vocalisation. The adult deals with this, not by persisting with the unfinished business of eliciting an acceptable version of *shower* from the child, but by confirming this new action with *yea an' that's a wash basin that's right where you wash your hands yes*, and joining in the signing. This confirmation turn consists of a repeat of the child's action (the adult joins in the signing), several overt confirmation markers (*yea, that's right, yes*), a model of the vocalised form of the label (*that's a wash basin*), and also a verbal gloss on the child's sign (*where you wash your hands*). In several ways this turn grants the child's prior action the status of having been a label. The adult's labelling utterance, *an' that's a wash basin* provides a candidate interpretation of the child's sign, and by supplying a gloss on that sign, *where you wash your hands*, the adult provides an account for this interpretation. He displays, in other words, how it is that the child's action is being treated as a version of *wash basin*. What is more, his labelling utterance displays by its design (*that's a*) that the

sign has been interpreted as a label. For instance, if the adult had here substituted simply *wash basin*, such an utterance may well have had the characteristics of a candidate interpretation of the child's action - but it would not have been explicit as to what KIND of action it was taking *wash basin* to be. *That's a wash basin* is a labelling utterance: it therefore treats its prior as having been a labelling action. Further, in *an' that's a wash basin*, the use of *and* (in a similar way as has been noted for other examples) helps to construct the current action (the labelling of *wash basin*, and here, vicariously, the CHILD'S labelling of *wash basin*) as a next in a series of actions. By doing this, not only does the adult treat the child's signing as having been a next labelling attempt, he also effectively displays the 'unfinished business' of labelling the preceding referent, *shower*, to be 'dealt with for now'. And indeed, the participants do not come back to it.

How, then, can we account for the fact that in (50) a sign is treated as an adequate label, while in (49) it is not? There are several example in the corpus where this child employs the use of makaton signs. However in most cases the sign is produced simultaneously with a vocalisation, and these are treated by the adult in the same way as other vocalised labels. There are not sufficient examples of signing unaccompanied by spoken words to build up a feasible account for why a sign in (49) is treated as inadequate, while in (50) it is accepted. It may of course be that *telephone* is known to be a word in the child's spoken vocabulary, and *wash basin* is known not to be. Evidence has already emerged to indicate that the adult is able to modify the structure of the testing format presented by labelling talk in light of knowledge or expectations concerning the child's linguistic ability. But a further possibility suggested here is that the child's sign in (50) is accepted because it is a spontaneous label on the part of the child. Not only is it not elicited by the adult, it does not occur in a 'labelling' position in sequence, following termination of a prior labelling issue. Instead, it breaks into the activity in progress (working on the *shower* label), and therefore has the quality of a noticing, rather than a label in an appropriate

sequential position, which has been elicited simply by the routine of labelling talk. It is therefore, in a sense, not a move in the labelling game - and so perhaps not subject to its rules. As a noticing, a spontaneous naming of a noticed referent, it is receipted and confirmed. In (49), on the other hand, the child's response occupies a specified position in sequence, by coming after an adult elicitation, and therefore is regarded, and treated, as a labelling move. Following an adult elicitation, then, a child action can legitimately be brought to book for not having been that which was being elicited; while outside such a sequential position a child's label is not subject to evaluation within the same specifications.

The following instance shows a further way in which a child's non-vocal response, while addressing the question and displaying recognition of the referent, can be treated as insufficient as a labelling move:

(51) (CC)

adult : ooh an' wha:t's that what mammy
 u:ses ((points to page))
 (1.4) ((child looks at
 book))
 (1.4) ((child looks up
 ahead then to right &
 points))

adult : washing machi:ne ((child makes to
 leave table))
 (.)

adult : ((restrains child)) no: stop at
 ta:ble da:rling you needn't to go
 'n' sho:w me it's the:re look
 {·hh ((points to page))

child : {[n:e^{əh}] ((pointing to right,
 looking at adult))

adult : ((looking at child)) yes what is
 i:t

(0.5) ((child looks at
book))

adult : washing mach{i:ne

child : { [b]_ε:ə]

(.)

adult : washing machine yea ((moves
point))

child : [dup] =
ρ

adult : = and what's tha:t

The child responds to the adult's eliciting question by pointing to her right. The adult, signalling the inadequacy of this as a response, prompts with an utterance of *washing machine* with rise-fall-rise pitch. When the child makes to leave the table (presumably in order to better indicate the referent of her point), he physically restrains her, asks her to *stop at table*, and points out the inappropriacy of her behaviour with *you needn't to go 'n' show me its there look*. This utterance obliquely gives an account for why the child's behaviour here is inappropriate: there is no need to point at the washing machine in the kitchen because we can point at the washing machine on the page. This particular game, in other words, requires something more than pointing. The child points again in the direction of her original point, looking at the adult, and with an utterance which sounds like *there*. One option for the adult in this position would have been a clarifying turn such as *say washing machine*, along the lines of *say telephone* in (49). Instead, he produces *yes what is it*. With *yes* he receipts her action (utterance and point), and acknowledges that he sees that she has understood what the picture represents. He also reformulates an elicitation - *what is it*. By reformulating an elicitation when he has already supplied the target label (*washing machine*), the adult seems to be teaching the expectations of that elicitation - demonstrating what *what is it* means in the context of the labelling game, and giving

guidance (albeit more indirectly than with a prompt such as *say washing machine*) as to its sequential implications. After a short pause with no child response he gives another version of the label with rise-fall-rise pitch, in overlap with which the child vocalises [bʰɛ : ə]. This utterance sounds very little like the target, but it is, crucially, a vocalisation, uttered while the child is looking at the book. As such, it is acknowledged (*washing machine yea*) as having been an appropriate move.

Summary

An adult's elicitation, then, may be unsuccessful, not only when the child's response is a wrong label (a circumstance which will be investigated in the next chapter), but also when the child fails to respond, or when the child's response does not conform to the adult's expectations of what counts as an appropriate attempt at a label. Picture book reading is a routine activity, one which the children here will have engaged in with their caretakers many times before. However, while the basic format of the activity remains constant, the rules for its operation may change somewhat over time, as the adult's criteria for what counts as an appropriate labelling attempt shift, in line with the child's linguistic development. It is therefore important that it is made clear to the child just what is expected. In (48), (49) and (51), there is evidence that the adult can teach the child something of the expectations governing labelling sequences - can be training the child in the rules of the labelling game.

This section so far has considered various kinds of adult elicitation which initiate labelling sequences - focussing in particular on the most common, the WH-question elicitation, and some of its design features - and has also looked at some of the ways in which failed elicitation of this kind are managed. The remainder of the section will focus on those sequences where it is the child who initiates.

3.4.iii Child Initiated Sequences

In 23 of the 100 sequences of the corpus, a labelling sequence opens with a child's label produced in response to seeing the picture. (In other cases a child utterance at the opening of a sequence is unclear as regards whether it is a labelling attempt, a deictic utterance, or unrelated to the labelling issue.) As has already been argued, it is perhaps misleading to talk of these as spontaneous labels, since the structure of the interaction does not really award these turns the status of openings. For example, consider (52):

(52) (TT)

adult : duck what do ducks do

child : [ʔũẽ̃.ə.²]

(0.4) ((sound of pages))

adult : w:ack wack (h)h ((sound of

```
(  pages ) )
```

→ child : $\{ [m_{\frac{p}{2}}^2, m_{\frac{p}{2}+}^2, k^1, p^{\frac{n}{2}} \underline{\xi}^{\frac{n}{2}} p^{\frac{n}{2}} \cdot n^{\frac{n}{2}}] \}$

(.)

adult : elepha:n:t good bo:y

The child's label [$\rho^h \underline{\xi}^{\partial} \rho^h \tilde{\tau}^{\frac{\partial}{\Xi}} \cdot n \epsilon^s$] (*elephant*), is produced without pause following his comment on a previous label. And with very little pause the adult confirms with a repeat of the label and a confirmation marker (*elephant good boy*). In other words, the third part of the standard three-part structure of the labelling sequence (*elicitation - label - receipt*) is retained. In an earlier sequence, (27), it has already been seen how, due to the routinised nature of picture book talk, the first part of that structure can be attenuated:

(27) (CC)

adult : oo:h what's that ((points))

(0.5)

child : [e:ə]

setting, is not intended to test a co-participant's knowledge, but is a 'real' question - a request for information. A similar circumstance seems to give rise to the exchange in (54):

(54) (TA)

- adult : a:nd what's that
(3.3)
- child : [b̥a·Idəŋə·ʔtʃəvəsʲ]
(.)
- adult : n:o that's the rhi:nɔcɛros that's
the-
(1.7)
- child : [ɪd̥ɛpʰɔd:v·m:(ə())]
adult : { (hh)hippopota(h)mus
°yes° =
- child : = what's this
- adult : hippopotamus:
(0.4)
- child : what's this
(0.7)
- adult : what's another hippopotamus
there are two:

One of a pair of objects has been named as *hippopotamus*. What then is the other, which has not been covered by this label? The adult has, after all, indicated a singular referent in her eliciting question, *and what's that*. When the second of the pair is then identified as *hippopotamus*, uncertainty seems to be raised for the first one. In the following extract also, the adult treats the child's query as requesting information:

(55) (TA)

- child : what's this
- adult : it's a r:ai:nbow

The questions in these three sequences are treated as 'real', as requesting information, by virtue of the way in which the adult's response is formulated. *It's an x* is not a response type ever used by a child after an adult elicitation. *It's* marks the response as being an informing. In (54), the formulation of the adult's response to the child's second question - *that's another hippopotamus there are two* - addresses the problem which the child is displaying. In (53), *there's another island there's one two three islands* works in a very similar way, to clarify a perceived confusion on the part of the child. These turns too, by opening with *that's* and *there's*, are built as informings²⁵. And it is notable that, unlike other kinds of adult labelling turns, they do not project a repeated labelling attempt by the child. They are, then, quite unlike the adult labels which were seen to initiate a labelling sequence as in extract (4):

- (4) (TT)
- | | | |
|---|--------|--|
| | adult: | °queue:n° |
| | | (.) |
| | child: | [ɹ̥ ^g _i [~] ɹ̥ _n] |
| | | (1.2) |
| → | adult: | °queue:n° |
| | child: | yeah |
| → | adult: | say it |

It has already been seen that picture book labelling sequences are structured, first and foremost, as displays of the child's lexical knowledge. When labelling takes the direction of (53), (54) and (55) and the child starts asking questions instead of answering them, the central objective of the labelling game is in jeopardy. One strategy, then, which the adult can take in order to stave off this kind of degeneration, is to turn around a child's query and present it back to the child. The following sequence occurs very early on in the reading of a book, and is the first labelling sequence of that particular book reading session:

²⁵If informing turns are often structurally marked (by the presence of *it's*, *that's* etc.) as different from adult labelling turns which solicit a child version, it is interesting that the adult's response - *hippopotamus* - to the child's second question in (54) comes off as such an informing. Here, a high rise-fall pitch contour seems to give this turn the force of "you just said it".

(56) (TA)

child : what's this
→ adult : er::m: (.) yo{u t}ell me: what =
child : {°()°}
adult : = is it
(1.0)
child : z:e:bra
adult : zebra:: ye:s

In such a position it is important for the adult to establish the rules of the activity which is being embarked upon, and she explicitly makes plain just who is supposed to be doing the labelling (*you tell me*). A similar sequence occurs between the exchanges represented in extracts (53) and (55) above:

(57) (TA)

adult : it's a r:ai:nbow
(0.8)
child : what's this
→ adult : w'll you tell me what is it =
child : = i:sland
adult : i:sland yes

The child has just had one query answered: when he makes another there is a danger of a pattern being established which will be detrimental to the proper functioning of labelling. The adult, then, puts the ball back into the child's court, with *w'll you tell me*.

In both these cases, the child is proved to have the answer to his own query readily available. In (56), the child produces an appropriate label after a second's pause following the adult's turn, while in (57) his label follows hard on the heels of the adult's redirected query, with no gap at all. It is then an open question whether or not in a sequence such as (53) the query was genuinely motivated. It may be that the

adult is here, as in other situations, being selective and sensitive to the abilities of the child, by turning around a query in some sequences and not in others. However this may be, by taking this kind of action the adult can be seen to be putting the onus of producing the label first onto the child, and reinforcing the 'testing' nature of the labelling activity. As this is a test of the child's lexical knowledge, not only must the child produce the label, it must be the child who labels the picture first. Adult first off labels, it seems, even when they are solicited by the child, can be headed off.

3.4.iv Summary

This section has illustrated, preparatory to an investigation into the ways in which a child's labels are worked on at the lexical and phonetic level, some of the design features of the sequences which elicit those child labels. Consideration of different formats for label elicitation by the adult (WH-question, 'fill-the-blank' elicitation, provision of label) has pointed up the differential demands which these kinds of elicitation place on the child, and hence some of the options which are available to the adult engaged in this kind of interaction for tailoring the task at hand to the child's perceived abilities. The child's labelling turns have been seen to be presented as displays of lexical knowledge, in sequences designed, above all, to elicit child labels, and to elicit them, in the usual case, before the adult has produced the target label. The adult's evaluative receipt of the child's labels, in third turn position, further underlines the display status of those labelling turns. And it has been seen, too, that these sequences are didactic not only in the teaching of new vocabulary items: 'inappropriate' behaviours on the part of the child, such as producing the 'wrong' part of a labelling prompt, pointing or signing rather than vocalising a label, or soliciting a label from the adult, can be dealt with by the adult in such a way as to designate them AS inappropriate, to explicate the specific requirements of the activity at hand, and to engage the adult in teaching the child this particular game's 'rules'.

3.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has opened the analysis of picture book labelling talk which will continue in the following two chapters, and has located this analysis in relation to the scant documentation of this kind of interaction in the literature. The work of Ninio and Bruner (1978), has come under scrutiny, and it has been seen that, while some of their findings are reflected in the analysis being presented here, the quantificational, taxonomic approach which they take to their data obscures many of the finer details of the talk which they are investigating. In particular, weaknesses have been identified in Ninio and Bruner's handling of the sequential implications of certain actions; of the multifunctionality of linguistic forms; and of the notion of correction. These weaknesses have been illustrated and highlighted with reference to instances from the corpus of labelling sequences collected for this study.

The greater part of this chapter, section 3.4, has presented a detailed investigation of the labelling sequences which constitute this corpus. The analysis presented here represents the results of a systematic, initial progression through the corpus, directed towards an uncovering of the basic patterns in its design. In doing this, it has been possible to give a rough indication of the proportional frequency of certain phenomena - such as, for example, the proportion of adult initiations to child initiations, or of WH-questions to 'fill-the-blank' elicitations. Thus a picture has been sketched of the talk which constitutes picture book labelling.

Chapters Four and Five are directed towards filling in some details in selected areas of that sketch. Both chapters will be concerned with the ways in which labelling talk is constructed to work on linguistic aspects of the child's talk. While Chapter Five will address the phonetic reparation (and affirmation) which a child's labelling utterances receive, the following chapter will take a closer look at the work which is enacted on the child's talk at the lexical level - that is, at the attention which is paid to the child's choice of label.

CHAPTER FOUR

WORKING ON TALK: LEXICAL MATTERS

IN PICTURE BOOK LABELLING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter has given some indication of how the rules of the labelling game operate, such that through a variety of kinds of elicitation the child produces an attempt at labelling a given picture. This act can be seen as being at the heart of the labelling activity - the act which gives these sequences their purpose. If this interaction were primarily concerned with testing, then the adult's task would simply be to elicit a string of such labelling attempts. However, as has already been suggested, labelling sequences can be seen to have more in common with instructional than testing sequences in this regard. One important feature of the didactic nature of this talk is that, if the child gets the answer wrong, resources are available for repair work to be enacted on that wrong answer.

Ninio and Bruner (1978:13) note that, in their data, "all eleven incorrect labels offered by the child were corrected by the mother". They identify three categories of "correction": in two cases, the adult negated the child's label (*It is not an x*); in three cases she made an "offer of correct label" (*It is a y*); and in the remaining six cases she did both (*It is not an x, it is a y*). As was discussed in Chapter One, no indication is given in Ninio and Bruner's analysis of what the sequential implications might be of these three devices. It is interesting that they refer to an adult's corrected label in this position as an "OFFER of correct label" (my emphasis): such terminology suggests that some kind of take-up by the child is expected. But these issues are not systematically investigated. And it is simply misleading (and inaccurate) to refer to a turn of the form *It is not an x* as a correction, since correction is precisely what such a turn does NOT do. By contrast, this kind of formulation may very well invite SELF-correction by the child.

Issues such as these must be of central concern to any investigation into the precise operation of repair mechanisms in any kind of interaction. And since labelling sequences are focussed around the child's production of lexical items, and this kind of interaction is being looked at here specifically in relation to the kind of 'language lessons' the child receives, then it is to be expected that the issue of repair on the child's lexical choice, and the precise details of its machinery, will hold important information of central relevance to the concerns of this study.

The following section will consider a model for the organisation of conversational repair which has been outlined for other kinds of talk, and which will highlight those aspects of repair which will merit closer scrutiny in the labelling data. The data will then be examined in section 4.3, where consideration will be made of three areas in particular:- some of the difficulties to be faced in the identification of lexical repair; the design of lexical repair sequences; and some alternative repair designs which are not employed in this data. In section 4.4, it will be seen that the third turn position adult receipts which have already been identified as characteristic of labelling sequences are instrumental in the accomplishment of a complementary kind of work - non-repair or affirmation - whereby the adequacy of a child's choice of label is displayed. Finally, some of the implications of these findings will be assessed.

4.2 THE ORGANISATION OF REPAIR IN CONVERSATION

Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) have presented a model for the "organisation of repair" in conversation. They draw an important distinction between two components of a repair event - the initiation of repair, and its successful outcome or the repair itself. *Repair* here encompasses a wider domain than what is traditionally understood by *correction*, whereby some object which is heard as an error is replaced by some object which is oriented to as correct. Correction, for Schegloff et al., is just one

among many kinds of repair. They observe that either component of the repair event, the initiation or the repair itself, may be undertaken by the speaker of the 'repairable', or by some co-participant. This means that any repair event may be either self- or other-initiated, and may have its repair enacted either by self or other. Crucially, Schegloff et al. demonstrate that these possibilities are non-equivalent, such that a *preference* can be identified for self-initiation over other-initiation of repair, and for self- over other-correction. *Preference* here does not refer to any psychological inclination on the part of speakers, but concerns the structural design and sequential placement of these turns, such that opportunities for self-initiation of repair come before opportunities for other-initiation, and these opportunities for self-initiation are regularly taken. Moreover, other-initiation, when it does occur, is regularly performed in such a way as to withhold other-correction, and to invite self-correction by the speaker of the repairable. Conversation is regularly designed, in other words, to allow a speaker first go at repairing her or his own mistakes.

However, Schegloff et al. note an "apparent exception" to this pattern, in the realm of adult-child interaction. Their observation is formulated as follows:

We want to note one apparent exception to the highly constrained occurrence of other-correction, with the reservation that we note it not on the basis of extensive taped and transcribed conversational materials, but on the basis of passing observation, plus some inspection of a limited amount of taped and transcribed data. The exception is most apparent in the domain of adult-child interaction, in particular parent-child interaction; but it may well be more generally relevant to the not-yet-competent in some domain without respect to age. There, other-correction seems to be not as infrequent, and appears to be one vehicle for socialization. If that is so, then it appears that other-correction is not so much an alternative to self-correction in conversation in general, but rather a device for dealing with those who are still learning or being taught to operate with a system which requires, for its routine operation, that they be adequate self-monitors and self-correctors as a condition of competence. It is, in that sense, only a transitional usage, whose supersession by self-correction is continuously awaited.

(Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977:380-381)

The suggestion, then, is that child-adult interaction may present an exception to the preference for self-correction which is so pervasive in other kinds of conversation. And if other-correction is a "vehicle for socialisation", then a feasible hypothesis is that picture labelling talk, which has already been demonstrated to be didactic in nature, might be just the kind of environment in which other-correction is least constrained. Drew (1981) offers a careful sequential analysis of some instances of other-correction in a corpus of child-adult data presented by Wells and Montgomery (1981), and explicates in detail the distinction, in sequential terms, between adult turns which supply a correction, and those which invite the child to self-correct. The selection of other-correction, among other possibilities, by the adult, is seen as being one feature of talk marked as "instructing" - a kind of talk which is regularly engaged in between adults and children, at home as well as at school. This kind of initiation of repair displays a particular stance taken by the adult with respect to the repairable - a stance of KNOWING an error to have been made, and, moreover, of knowing what 'should' have been said. In Drew's words (1981:259), in these sequences, "what is (going to) stand as correct is not treated by [the adults] as a negotiable matter, or one over which the child has the same access to a possibly correct version as they do." Similarly, in picture labelling talk, there will be, in most cases, a 'right' word for each picture, and hence a 'right' response to each elicitation - a target which is accessible to the adult as a yardstick by which to evaluate the child's responses. The details of lexical repair, then, and particularly the relationship between self- and other-correction of the child's choice of labels, merit careful examination here, as these issues will be central to a characterisation of what constitutes 'working on talk'.

The following section will consider the instances of lexical repair which appear in the picture labelling corpus, and will investigate the details of their design, as well as considering alternative repair strategies which are NOT taken up in this kind of talk. The section will start, however, with an illustration of some of the difficulties to be faced in first of all identifying instances of lexical repair.

4.3.i Identifying Lexical Repair

(47) (CC)

(2.2)

(46) (CC)

(0.6)

→ adult : ((looking at child)) ·h coo ker

(58)²⁶ (CC)

adult : ·hh ((moves point)) 'n' what's
'is one he:re

child : ((signs telephone)) [R̥::R̥:]
 ((looks at adult))
 (.)

→ adult : tele pho:ne ((looking at child))

child : [R̥:::ʰ] ((not signing, looking
 away, moving about in
 chair))

adult : say telepho:ne

These three extracts were all examined in the previous chapter. In (47), the adult's (arrowed) labelling turn follows a 2.2 second silence after his elicitation, and therefore addresses a straightforward non-response by the child. In (46), a similarly constructed turn follows an indication from the child that she is unable to supply the elicited response. And in (58), the same kind of turn addresses a rather different kind of problem, since it follows a child response which patently addresses the adult's eliciting question and, what is more, identifies the picture correctly, yet is deemed inadequate as a response because it is not a spoken word. This particular shape of turn, then, a production of the target label with a rise-fall-rise pitch contour, is employed by the adult to initiate repair in the face of three distinct problematic child actions: - non-response; an indication of the child's INABILITY to respond; and a signed rather than a spoken response. The following two extracts suggest that just the same shape of turn may address a fourth kind of difficulty - a problem located in the child's choice of label:

²⁶This is the opening of extract (49).

(59) (CC)

adult : tree ye:s (.) and what is that

child : ((signs)) [tʰdʷy.θ]

~~~~~

→ adult : hou:se

(1.8)

adult : what is it

(60) (CC)

1 adult : ooh what's tha:t

2 (0.7) ((child lifts both  
hands above table))

3 child : [dʰh] ((throwing both hands  
down to sides))

~~~~~

4 → adult : television

5 (1.0) ((child lifts hand))

6 child : [dʰ] ((child points at
P. left hand page...))

7 (0.5) (...then right hand
page then left hand
page))

8 adult : television tha:t's where the
picture ((child points to right
hand page)) comes on isn't it

9 (0.5)

10 child : ((point sustained)) [dʰ]

11 adult : ((moves point to right hand
page)) what's tha:t

12 (.)

13 child : ·hh h ((lifts both hands
above table))

14 child : [tʰɛ:əh] ((drops both hands,
left to side & right
to rest on table))

15 adult : ta:ble yea 'n' ((points)) what's
that

Extract (59) presents a fairly clear instance of this same turn shape - a rise-fall-rise labelling turn - addressing what is apparently a lexical problem evidenced by the child's response. The child accompanies her utterance with a sign which involves touching her hands together in front of her chest, raising her right hand to touch her forehead, and bringing it down to touch her left in front of her chest again. The signification of both the child's utterance and her sign is unclear, but both seem dissimilar enough to any identifiable representation of *house* to warrant being treated by the adult as a wrong label.

In (60), a similar claim can be made that the child's utterance in line 3 represents, for the adult at the time, a wrong label. However, in this case, such a claim requires substantiation through a more detailed explication of the sequence. When the adult asks his initiating question in line 1, his finger (which is almost always used to point with each elicitation) is on the right hand side of the book (where he has just turned the page) where there is a picture of a table and chair. Only at the end of his utterance does his finger move to the left hand page, where there is a picture of a television. The child's first utterance (and sign), then, could legitimately be an attempt at *table*, and her subsequent pointing at the two pages and her vocalisation in line 6 seem to be orienting to just such a misunderstanding having occurred.

This interpretation is supported by the child's gesture accompanying her first utterance, which is similar to a makaton version of *table*. When the adult produces a version of the target label, *television*, with a rise-fall-rise pitch contour, the child seems to identify the problem as concerning a mistaken referent, by vocalising quietly, while pointing in the book from the table to the television and back to the table. The adult, however, seems not to pick up on this difficulty, and continues with a further version of the label and some elaborating comment. The child then points again to the right hand page where there is a picture of a table, and vocalises, [d_±a]

(line 10). This sounds like, and is treated by the adult as, a deictic utterance. This action is consistent with the suggestion that the child is attempting to clarify the earlier misunderstanding. In response to the adult's eliciting question on this picture, the child has no difficulty in producing a (signed and uttered) version of *table*, which the adult receipts. This version, in both its phonetic and gestural features, has much in common with the child's turn in line 3.

If the child's turn in line 3 is a version of *table*, it is in correspondence with the picture she is orienting to, but a wrong label as far as the adult's orientations are concerned. As in the previous examples, the adult addresses this difficulty with a production of the target label (*television*) with rise-fall-rise pitch.

These sequences demonstrate that this particular turn shape functions as a rather unspecific repair initiator. It signals that the child has not responded adequately, without giving any specific indication as to what the nature of the problem is. Two distinct difficulties are posed by this sort of lack of specificity. First, it poses a difficulty for the analyst in identifying just what counts as an instance of repair on lexical choice in the data, since this decision hinges on whether or not a child utterance which receives this kind of adult response is being treated by the adult as a label (and hence a wrong label) or not. Two short extracts will illustrate this difficulty. In (61), it is unclear whether the adult is treating the child's utterance as a poor attempt at *bike*, as another label, or as a deictic utterance:

(61) (CC)

	adult :	((points to page)) <u>what is that</u>
		(1.1) ((child points to page))
	child :	$\frac{[\partial_{\frac{p}{+}}a]}{\sim}$
→	adult :	<u>bi:ke</u>
	child :	$[\text{b}_{\frac{p}{+}}^h]$

adult : ((nods & moves point)) 'n' what
is that

Similarly in the following extract there is no indication as to whether the child's turn is being treated as a phonetically inadequate version of *shower*, or as a different label altogether (or, for that matter, as some non-labelling utterance):

(62)²⁷ (CC)
adult : and what's that ((points))
(.)
child : [pʊɛ:ə]
(.)
→ adult : show:er

Hence, the analyst may find an adult turn which comprises a target label with rise-fall-rise pitch in a position where it is apparent that lexical work is appropriate and relevant (such as in (60)) - but have no way of claiming that this is in fact the order of work which is being accomplished by such a turn.

The second kind of difficulty posed by the multifunctionality of a turn shape like this one is more far-reaching and analytically more interesting. These turns also pose a potential problem for the child, since this kind of repair initiation is extremely weak in its power to locate the trouble source (Schegloff et al 1977:369). This kind of response, presented to the child in a variety of situations in which her or his own prior action is deemed to be in some way problematic, gives the child no way of identifying what order of problem that last action carried, nor any indication of how to remedy it.

It is pertinent here to probe a little deeper into identifying more precisely the order of interactional work which is being accomplished by this particular turn design. It is

²⁷This is the opening of extract (50).

important to remember that the adult here, by initiating repair in this way, is selecting from a number of possible ways in which he COULD have initiated repair. He is opting not, for instance, to locate a lexical problem precisely with a turn such as *no, it's not x, it's y*. And the particular formulation used is remarkably vague, not only with regard to locating the trouble source, but more generally in respect of the status which it awards the child's prior turn. This kind of turn supplies the correct version of the label, but it is not clear, however, whether it should properly be regarded as accomplishing the work of correction. Two possible interpretations of these turns are suggested by a consideration of both their sequential positioning and their prosodic design. One possibility is that they simplify, for the child, the task at hand, by presenting a candidate answer to the eliciting question which has demonstrably presented the child with difficulty. A second possibility is that they act as an understanding check, contingent on the child's response. The difference between these two kinds of action resides principally in the status which each awards the child's preceding action; and the feasibility of either interpretation can only be tested by making recourse to the sequential consequences of the employment of this kind of turn. In what follows, these two possible interpretations of the rise-fall-rise labelling turn will be elaborated and tested against the data.

The first possibility to be explored is that an adult turn which carries a label with this pitch pattern offers the child, for confirmation, a candidate answer to the previous eliciting question which the child has demonstrated an inability to answer satisfactorily. In other words, it may follow up a failed *what's that?* question, with a question which amounts to *is it an x?*. Such a strategy would, in effect, treat the child's non-response or inappropriate response as indicative of an inability to respond appropriately, by simplifying the task which is being presented to the child. Drew (1981:259) cites the following extract (from Wells and Montgomery 1981) where an adult, in the face of a non-answer from a child, modifies the task she is presenting, thus characterising the child's non-answer as due to an INABILITY to answer:

(BDLP: Extract A)

M : Whats the time / by the clock

R : Uh

M : Whats the time

(3.0)

→ M : (Now) what numbers that

((Pointing to position
of hands on the clock))

In this extract, the simplification consists of a breaking down of the task of telling the time into its component parts. After an elicitation of a label with a *what's that?* question, a 'questioning label' might simplify the task being presented by limiting the range of responses which the child has to choose from to just two -yes or no.

However, there is evidence that the participants here are not treating these turns as constituting this kind of *yes/no* question. Consider the following:

(63)²⁸ (CC)

adult : ·hh 'n' what's that

(0.6)

child : ((turns to look at adult)) [pɑ]

⏟

⏟

→ adult : ((looking at child)) ·h[k^wh_y · k^hə.]

(0.7)

⏟

⏟

→ child : ((looking back at book)) [d^wɪd^wɔ̃d^wə]

adult : ((moving point)) clever girl (.)

'n' what are them

It has already been argued that the child's first utterance in this sequence, produced while looking at the adult, appears to indicate an inability to answer the adult's *what's that?* question. Her second, uttered while looking back down at the book and in

²⁸This is an extension of extract (46).

response to the adult's rise-fall-rise label, has all the characteristics of a labelling turn. While phonetically this turn may appear rather unlike the adult's label, it nonetheless has certain features in common with it which suggest that it is indeed a version of *cooker*. For instance, while both consonantal portions of this utterance are characterised by alveolarity rather than velarity, they are also, as in the adult version, marked by plosion; and the syllable structure of both turns is similar. The lip rounding which is sustained throughout the whole of the child's utterance (consonantal and vocalic portions), is a feature of the adult's first syllable. The first vocalic portion in the child's version, while front, is high and rounded, like the adult's. Her second, while rounded, is central - again, like the adult's.

The child, then, has produced, not a *yes* or *no* response, but a version of the label. And the adult, by receipting this turn (*clever girl*), and moving on to a next elicitation ('*n*' *what are them*), not only treats this utterance AS a label, but validates a labelling turn as having been an appropriate one for the child to take.

There is just one instance in the corpus where it might be claimed that the child responds to an adult's rise-fall-rise label with a *yes/no* answer. This is a sequence part of which has already been examined:

(64)²⁹ (CC)

adult : 'hh- yea same as you've got in
your box ((pointing to page)) 'n'
what's tha:t

(2.2)

adult : sc::isso:rs

→ child : [j^wē:ə]

→ (.)((child looks at adult))

²⁹This is an extension of extract (47).

→ adult : ((looking at child)) scissors
→ ((nods)) ye:s ((starts to
turn page))

Here, as was demonstrated in the opening of this subsection, the adult meets the child's failure to respond (a pause of 2.2 seconds) with a version of the label with a steep rise-fall-rise pitch contour. The child's utterance in response, [j^wɛ:ɛ], after which she looks at the adult, sounds like a version of *yea*. If it is, the adult's response is interesting. He receipts it with *scissors yes*, a turn which appears to treat the child's prior as having been a version of *scissors*. This extract, then, like (63) supports the contention that a *yes/no* answer is not necessarily what the adult is looking for following a rise-fall-rise labelling turn.

The second possibility to be explored is that the rise-fall-rise label in these sequences can be regarded, not as a reformulated query which narrows the scope of the child's task, but as a kind of understanding check. One class of 'clarification request'³⁰ identified by Langford (1981:164) in adult-child talk consists of "repeats of the whole of the child's utterance, usually with rising intonation". Such a turn, for Langford, "purports to be an echo" of the child's turn, and is a way of offering an utterance back to a speaker, to check some aspect of it which has been problematic. If the rise-fall-rise labels here are viewed in this light, the adult's turn in, for example, (61), could amount to, not *is it a bike?*, but rather *did you say "bike"?*.

(61) (CC)

adult : ((points to page)) what is that
(1.1) ((child points to
page))
child : [ɔ̃₊ɛ₊ɑ]

³⁰See Kelly and Local (1989b) for an explication of why *understanding check* is a more satisfactory term here.

→ adult : bi:ke
 child : [b_hp^h]
 adult : ((nods & moves point)) 'n' what
 is that

This analysis provides a plausible reading of this extract, since it is quite arguably NOT clear whether or not the child has said *bike* in her first turn. This is a legitimate circumstance, then, in which to find such a question. However, the same kind of interpretation applied to the rise-fall-rise label in (64) presents a problem:

(64) (CC)

adult : ·hh- yea same as you've got in
 your box ((pointing to page)) 'n'
 what's tha:t
 → (2.2)
 → adult : sc::isso:rs
 child : [j^wë:ə]
 (.)((child looks at adult))
 adult : ((looking at child)) scissors
 ((nods)) ye:s ((starts to
 turn page))

To extend this interpretation to the adult's *scissors* in this extract leads to a claim that the adult is here taking a turn which amounts to *did you say "scissors"?* when the child has patently said nothing at all. Such an interpretation may thus, at first sight, appear untenable. However, if this is what the adult is doing here, then he is opting to initiate repair in a very particular way. He could, instead, have said *it's scissors*, or *scissors* with falling pitch or some other kind of prosodic pattern which might be associated with finality. These turns would have done correction - would have 'replaced' the child's silence with a 'correct' response. But by building his turn as an

understanding check, the adult withholds this kind of overt correction. As Drew (1981:256) has pointed out, a repair initiator which does not enact correction but gives an opportunity for the speaker to self-correct, may treat an error as a rather different kind of thing from one which corrects. "In using an invitation to self-correct, recipient may treat an error as an unintended slip, whilst the outright correction form treats the error as something the child doesn't and couldn't know...". A turn which withholds correction keeps alive the possibility that the error was due to some other, less discreditable, failing than the child's not knowing the answer. Here, for the adult to build his invitation to the child to self-correct as an understanding check taking the form of the target label, is to do more, even, than this. It is to keep alive the possibility that, or to behave as if, the child has in fact supplied the correct version. When, in (62), the child says [$\rho\upsilon\ddot{e}:\ddot{e}$], the adult does not say [$\rho\upsilon\ddot{e}:\ddot{e}$] with rise-fall-rise pitch: he says *shower*. He builds a turn which, by (at least in part) its pitch configuration, "purports to be an echo" of the child's turn, and therefore suggests that *shower* might have been what the child said. And it seems that, even in a sequence like (64) where the child has said nothing at all, this possibility can still, in a sense, be kept alive. It becomes apparent, then, that not only is other-correction being withheld in these sequences. Beyond this, invitations to self-correct are being designed in such a way as to allow the child the absolute maximum 'benefit of the doubt'.

This subsection has considered some of the difficulty faced in discriminating instances of lexical repair in the corpus, and has suggested that the very lack of specificity which characterises repair initiations of one particular design may be one way in which the adult engaged in labelling interaction with a child can keep alive the possibility that no lexical error has occurred. The following subsection focusses on the design of sequences where lexical error is hearably evident, and tests against this data the proposition which was suggested by Schegloff et al.'s (1977) observation concerning the preference organisation surrounding repair in adult-child talk, and

which was put forward in section 4.2 - that the didactic setting of adult-child picture labelling might supply an environment in which other-correction of the child's mistakes is particularly unconstrained.

4.3.ii The Design Of Lexical Repair

In the corpus as a whole, instances of repair on lexical aspects of the child's turns are quite rare. This observation lends support to the contention, put forward during consideration of the variable design of label elicitations in Chapter Three, that the picture book routine is flexible in its construction such that the adult can display sensitivity to the child's abilities, and tailor the task to minimise child failure. However, those instances where the adult does repair the child's choice of word are of interest in that they provide some insight into the ways in which correction is managed in this kind of interaction.

In the following two extracts, the repair initiator which the adult uses is, rather like the rise-fall-rise labelling turns considered in the previous subsection, quite unspecific when it comes to locating the nature of the problem which it is addressing:

(65) (TA)

adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t

(0.5)

child : [h p v ʔ q]

(.)

→ adult : what

(66) (TA)

adult : Q::h what's that

(.)

child : [be.^uk^{xə}p.^ũ]

(0.6)

→ adult : a what

In (65), the adult's *what* in third turn position initiates repair, by indicating that the child's utterance was problematic for her in some way. But it gives no clue as to what the nature of the problem might have been, and makes no claim as to whether or not the child's utterance was even an attempted label.³¹ Here again, then, there is no way of establishing that what we are dealing with is lexical repair.

In (66) on the other hand, there is at least some indication in the adult's choice of repair-initiating turn as to what status is being awarded its prior. By building *what* into a turn alongside a determiner, *a what*, the adult identifies the prior turn as having had the structure of a nominal and, by implication, probably suggests that it was a label. But this turn is still weak with respect to its power to locate the trouble source. It does not indicate what was problematic about that labelling attempt - whether, for example, it was a phonetic or lexical difficulty, or one of hearing/understanding.

In both these sequences, however, it can be noted that the child's utterance - [^hp^uɿq] in (65), and [bə·ʔkʰə p·ʔ] in (66) - is one which is difficult to interpret. It may be that in both these cases, where the adult uses a non-specific repair initiator, it is because she could not interpret what the child was attempting to say.

By contrast, when the child has hearably produced an inappropriate label, repair initiation is quite specific as to the nature of the problem. Consider the first part of extract (54), cited in Chapter Three:

(67) (TA)

adult : a::nd what's that

(3.3)

child : [ba·Idəne.²ʃəvəsɪ]
(.)

³¹This utterance sounds rather like a version of *owl* (the target label) which is cut off by (perhaps accidental) uvular closure.

→ adult : n:ɔ that's the rhi:nɔceros that's
→ the-
(1.7)
child : [ɪdɛpʰɔd:v.m:{ə()}]
adult : {(hh)hippopota(h)mus
°yes°

In her repair-initiating turn here, the adult points unambiguously to the fact that an error has been made (*no*); she locates it as an error of lexical choice (by means of prominence - on-syllable pitch movement - on *that's* in *that's the rhinoceros*, a labelling utterance built as an informing); but she doesn't herself supply the correction. Instead she invites the child to self-correct, by using a fill-the-blank strategy (*that's the*). The child's repaired attempt (*hippopotamus*) is swiftly acknowledged and affirmed as having been appropriate, with a receipting turn (*hippopotamus yes*).

On occasion, however, the adult may decline the option of inviting self-correction from the child, and instead, after pointing to the error, supply the correction herself:

(68)³² (TA)
adult : that's a man cow and tha:t's
a-
(.)
child : [b^θu:kʰp.v]=
→ adult : =no it's not a bl:ue car i-
→ COW it's a WOMAN c(h)o:w
child : a woma:n cow
adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t

The adult repairs the child's [b^θu:kʰp.v] with *no it's not a blue car i- cow it's a woman cow*. In this turn (in which the adult repairs her own utterance of *car* to *cow*)

³²This is an extension of extract (31).

she again points to the child's error (*no*), and as well as locating it as one of lexical choice (*it's not a blue...cow*), she provides the correct version herself (*it's a woman cow*). The correction, then, is achieved in a *not x but y* format. But what is also apparent in this sequence is that, even though the adult has produced the correct label, the child also produces the correct label, in next turn (*a woman cow*). And this child repeat of the adult's correction is receipted by the adult with *right*, before she moves on to elicit a next label. Even when the correction is produced by the adult, then, the child produces a corrected version.

In the same vein, consider the following example:

- (69)³³ (TA)
- child : { [ḡ₊h] }
- adult : { [hə] }
- child : [n₊ʌ^θvɛ̃h]
- adult : noah no tha:ts not norah
- tha:t's [n:ɔ:^θp̣]
- (0.6)
- adult : what's he ca:lled=
- child : =[G₊ə^{θw}ɛ̃h]
- adult : noah
- (.)
- adult : an' tha:t's no:rah

The adult's first turn appears to begin as an affirmation (*noah*), but she then initiates repair and carries out correction in a *not x but y* format (*no that's not norah that's noah*). The correction here is not, however, followed by a child version of the correct label. And this is an absence which the adult orients to. After a 0.6 second pause, she prompts a child attempt with *what's 'e called?*. After the prompt, the child does produce a version, [G₊ə^{θw}ɛ̃h], which, while rather unlike the adult's [n:ɔ:^θp̣], can still be seen to differ significantly from his earlier [n₊ʌ^θvɛ̃h]. Crucially, in his second

³³This is an extension of extract (13).

version, the first vocalic portion is raised, relative to the first version, and syllable juncture is marked by bilabiality, rather than labiodentality. This sounds, then, like a version of *noah* rather than a version of *norah*. And it is treated as such by the adult, who receipts it with a further version, before locating a picture for the child's first label (*an' that's norah*).

These sequences are designed, then, such that, even when the correct label is supplied by the adult, the child will still produce a version of that correct label. This is important for issues of phonetic work which will be discussed in Chapter Five. Nonetheless, what are presented by extracts (68) and (69) are instances of other-correction by the adult. The question which is raised for consideration, then, is whether these instances support Schegloff et al.'s suggestion that in adult-child talk other-correction (on the part of adults) may not be dispreferred.

In addressing this question, it will be informative to consider these two sequences alongside (65), (66) and (67), where the adult initiates repair by withholding other-correction - that is, by inviting the child to self-correct:

(65) (TA)

adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t
 (0.5)
child : [^hp^v₊q]
 (.)
adult : what

(66) (TA)

adult : o::h what's thatat
 (.)
child : [be.^vk^xe̞e̞.ṽ]
 (0.6)
adult : a what

(67) (TA)

adult : a::nd what's that

(3.3)

child : [b₊a·I d₊ə n₊ə·²tʃə v₊ə sʃ]

(.)

adult : n:o that's the rhi:noceros that's
the-

(1.7)

child : [ɪ d₊ɛ p^hɔ d:u·m:(ə())]

adult : (hh)hippopota(h)mus

°yes°

A generalisation which can be drawn across these three extracts, where other-correction is withheld, is that, in each case, the problematic child utterance occurs in next turn to an adult's *what's that?* question. There is in some cases a substantial pause between the question and the child's answer (3.3 seconds in (67)) - but in every case the child's utterance which gives rise to the repair is in next turn to an elicitation. In other words, it is the child's first attempt at that particular label. In (68), by contrast, this is not the case. The talk in extract (68) follows that produced in extract (66) as follows:

(70) (TA)

1 adult : o::h what's that

2 (.)

3 → child: [b^uə·^vk^xə p·^ʃ]

4 (0.6)

5 adult : a what

6 (0.4)

7 child : ma:n cow=

8 adult : =that's a man cow and tha:t's

9 a-

10 (.)

11 → child : [b^əu:k^hp·^v]=

12 → adult : =no it's not a bl:ue car i-

13 → COW it's a WOMAN c(h)o:w

14 child : a woma:n cow

15 adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t

The child's first attempt in this sequence is clearly problematic for the adult. It is far from clear just what the child is aiming at here (*bull cow* and *moo cow* are both possibilities). The adult's response (*a what*) both invites, and receives, self-correction by the child (*man cow*). The adult's next turn affirms this corrected version (*that's a man cow*), and elicits a second, apparently paired label, with a fill-the-blank construction (*and that's a-*). The child's response, $[b^{\theta}u:k^h p \cdot v]$, appears to be a version of the same label (whatever it was) that he gave in line 3, $[b^{\theta} \cdot v k^{\times \ddagger} p \cdot \tilde{u}]$. He has, then, made the same mistake twice. And this may well be a circumstance through which the adult will not withhold other-correction. Returning to Drew's remarks (1981:256) concerning the differential fitting of repair initiations to different kinds of errors, such that an outright correction treats an error as "something the child doesn't and couldn't know", we can observe that the child's providing the same wrong label for two consecutive and related pictures may well count as an indication, as far as the adult is concerned, that the child doesn't know the answer, and give her warrant to judge that further invitations to self-correct will be unsuccessful.

A comparable example is the following:

(71) (CC)

adult : ·khh (.) ooh what's that
 (0.8)

child : $[a:_{\pm}^{ag} \theta]_{+}$ ((drawing hand to
self))
(0.7) ((child stretches
hand to page))

Thus far, then, those sequences in which a child's wrong label represents a first labelling attempt exhibit no tendency towards other-correction; while two instances where other-correction does occur are seen to be instances where the child's error is a SECOND wrong labelling attempt. The only other instance in the corpus of an adult's outright other-correction of lexical choice is one which has already been presented, extract (69):

(69) (TA)

	child :	{ [ḡ ₊ h] }
	adult :	{ [nə] }
	child :	[n ^Λ ₊ əvɛ̃h]
→	adult :	noah no th _a :ts not <u>no</u> rah
→		th _a :t's [n:ɔ: ₊ əvɛ̃ ₊]
		(0.6)
	adult :	what's he <u>ca</u> :lled=
	child :	=[ḡ ₊ ə ^w ɛ̃h]
	adult :	noah

In this sequence, the child has produced the label [n^Λ₊əvɛ̃h] in response to seeing the picture, rather than in response to an adult elicitation. The child has earlier produced a quiet version of *no*rah, and perhaps the adult's first turn, broken off when the child starts to vocalise again, was the beginning of a response to that. But at the point at which the child produces [n^Λ₊əvɛ̃h] the adult has not explicitly indicated a problem or invited any self-correction from the child. [n^Λ₊əvɛ̃h] is, to all intents and purposes, a FIRST wrong labelling attempt within the sequence, which receives outright correction from the adult.

However, two related features of this sequence can be pointed to which mark it as a special case, and go some way towards providing an account for why other-correction is not being withheld here. The first is the adult's *no*ah which opens her correcting turn. As has been suggested, the adult appears to be starting to affirm the child's turn here, before her turn takes the form of a correction. Why this should be is arguable.

It may be that she is only belatedly orienting to the problem carried in the child's turn; indeed, she may be prompted to such an orientation by virtue of this very affirmation and an awareness of its dissimilarity to its prior. However, what can be noted is that in switching out of an affirmation, what she switches into is correction - not some invitation to self-correct. And it may be that this is not coincidental. It may be that, having begun to affirm a child's label and then, for whatever reason, wanting to retract that affirmation, one cannot backtrack to a position where an invitation to self-correct is a feasible option: one must launch straight into correction.

The second feature of this sequence which may be relevant to its providing an instance of other-correction is not unrelated. The child has produced a version of *norah* for a picture of *noah*. The two words are phonetically similar in most varieties of English: for this particular adult both have a vocalic portion which begins backish, rounded, and around mid height. In addition, *norah*, for this adult, has labiodentality and open approximation at syllable juncture, making little auditory contrast with the labiality and open approximation which tend to characterise this position in her pronunciation of *noah*. On occasion, the two words appear as similar as [nɔ̞:ʊɹ] and [n:ɔ̞:ʊɹ]. The child's 'wrong label', [nʌʊɹ], is, then, phonetically very similar to the target. It could well be judged, therefore, that the child could not reasonably be expected to identify his error and access a correction for himself. His particular wrong label indicates a potential genuine confusion of terms, which it may be reasonable for the adult to undertake to dispel.

The data under consideration in this subsection are informative, then, with regard to the suggestion that other-correction may not be constrained or dispreferred in adult-child talk in the same way as has been identified for interaction between adults. While there are few instances of lexical repair of any kind in the corpus, and while a substantial proportion of those few instances do involve adults correcting children, nonetheless those occurrences of other-correction are accountable in such a way as

not to invalidate the notion of a similar preference for self-correction holding in adult-child picture labelling as has been documented for adult-adult interaction. Specifically, other-correction was seen to occur in cases where the adult had warrant to treat a child's error as one of INABILITY to supply the appropriate label (rather than, for instance, a temporary memory lapse or lack of attention to the task). This warrant could be drawn, either from the child having twice produced an inappropriate label in a sequence (as in (70) and (71)), or from the child's particular choice of wrong label indicating a specific, remediable order of problem (as in (69)). There is insufficient evidence in this data to substantiate a claim that a similar preference organisation surrounding correction as has been identified in adults' talk is irrefutably in place here; but the evidence that there is gives us no indication that it is not.

It has already been suggested in this section that it is important to consider any instance of repair initiation as one option selected from many alternatives which the speaker has available. Before concluding this investigation of lexical repair in the corpus, it will be informative to give some thought to other options for repair work which are documented in other kinds of talk, but are not taken up in this data. The following subsection is addressed to drawing some comparisons of this kind.

4.3.iii Alternative Repair Initiations

In particular, three options for initiating repair will be considered, which are not techniques which these adults use here. These three repair-initiation designs can be loosely described as question reformulations, questioning repeats and unmitigated corrections. Each will be treated in turn.

Question reformulations

Bearing in mind that most of the picture labelling sequences under investigation here are also questioning sequences, it is pertinent to observe that one option for initiating repair on an answer to a question, is to reformulate the question. The following

extract from a standardised testing interaction, is taken from Marlaire and Maynard (1990). The clinician's response to an incorrect answer from the child is to supply a reformulation of the question which prompted it:

Example 10 (Woodcock-Johnson battery)
clinician : How 'bout this one? If I said
 what's the opposite... fer large
child : Darge
 [0.5 seconds' silence]
→ clinician : What's the opposite of large?

Likewise, one option for the adult in the picture book setting, in the face of a wrong answer to a *what's that?* question, would be to reformulate that question. As has already been seen in Chapter Three, this kind of action is, on occasion, taken by adults in the picture book data. The example seen earlier was (24):

(24) (CC)
 adult : ooh ((points)) what's that
 (2.8) ((child moves
 about in chair))
→ adult : what is it

However, reformulation is not an action taken by adults when the child has hearably produced a wrong label. To reformulate a question in face of a problematic answer is to locate the problem in some way in the question's original formulation. Hence, Marlaire and Maynard (1990:91) suggest that the clinician's reformulated question in their example above is sensitive to the potential difficulty raised by the "'hypothetical' packaging of the prompt" in the initial elicitation (*If I said what's the opposite...fer large*). In (24), it was argued in Chapter Three that the adult's reformulated question, *what is it*, treats the child as disattending to the *what's that?* question with which he has opened the sequence. When the child has produced a wrong label, on the other hand, it is clear that she or he is both attending to the task at hand, and has understood

the order of that task. Reformulated questions, then, do not initiate repair work on a child's choice of label.

Questioning repeats

A second repair initiation strategy notably absent from the picture labelling data, but described in other forms of talk, is a 'questioning repeat' of the repairable. That is to say, one doesn't find sequences of the structure -

child : x
adult : x?

- where the correct answer is y. Some documented examples from other kinds of interaction involving children are the following, reproduced in Drew (1981:248):

(TW:Ca:E:057)
child : He wants some oil
→ adult : Oi:l
child : Petrol

(GJ:FN)
((Three children playing water tag; Steven
has been tagged, and is now 'It'))

Steven : One, two, three, ((pause)) four
 five six, ((pause)) eleven eight
 nine ten.
→ Susan : Eleven? eight, nine, ten?
Steven : Eleven, eight, nine, ten.

Such a strategy invites self-correction. It presents the problematic utterance back to its speaker, for confirmation or rejection. In the first example, the speaker of the troublesome turn opts to reject the utterance; in the second, he opts to confirm it.

This kind of technique, then, is not unambiguous in identifying an error, but requires the speaker of the trouble source to reassess her or his utterance with that possibility in mind. It therefore requires a sophisticated degree of self-monitoring on the part of that speaker. This kind of repair initiation is not found in the picture book data. What ARE found, however, as has been seen, are sequences of the form -

child : x
adult : y?

-where the correct answer is, again, y. An example is extract (59):

(59) (CC)

adult : tree ye:s (.) and what is that
child : ((signs)³⁶ [tʰdʷv.ə]
~~~~~  
→ adult : hou:se  
(1.8)  
adult : what is it

The adult does not repeat the child's utterance with a rise-fall-rise pitch contour: instead he produces the TARGET label with this kind of contour. It would seem from many of the sequences already investigated, that an adult's utterance of a label y in this context, with some kind of rising or rise-fall-rising pitch, presents y as the target and solicits a child attempt at that target. Utterances of x with similar prosodic shape may be systematically avoided because they would, to the child, be indistinguishable from this kind of turn.

### Unmitigated corrections

A third kind of repair sequence absent from the data is the following:

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<sup>36</sup>See subsection 4.3.i.



child : x  
adult : y

- where the adult simply 'replaces' the error with a correction. Drew (1981:247) cites the following extract from Wells and Montgomery's (1981) data, where a child is reading out loud in response to points at a book from a teacher:

(BLDP: School Extract C)  
child : I / am / tall / said / the / -  
(2.0)  
(Teacher looks from text  
to child. Shapes lips to  
indicate sound))  
child : Tower  
→ teacher : Chimney

This kind of action on the part of the adult supplies a correction without explicitly pointing to the fact that an error has been made. It leaves the child to surmise the order of work which the adult's turn is doing. In the picture book data, by contrast, errors are typically explicitly pointed to, as was seen in extracts (67), (68), (69) and (71):

(72) (TA)  
adult : n:o that's the rhi:noceros  
that's the -

(73) (TA)  
adult : =no it's not a bl:ue car i-  
COW it's a WOMAN c(h)o:w

(74) (TA)  
adult : noah no tha:ts not norah  
tha:t's n::o:ah

adult : no it's a picture

In all these cases, *no* indicates that an error has been made. In (72) -(74) there is also a component in the adult's turn which locates or specifies the nature of the error (*that's the rhinoceros; it's not a blue...cow; that's not norah*). And when the correction itself is produced, it is built as an informing, with *that's* or *it's* (*it's a woman cow; that's noah ; it's a picture*). In this data, then, the status of correction turns appears to be explicitly marked in their design.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.3.iv Lexical Repair: A Summary

In this section, consideration of instances of lexical repair in the picture book setting has brought us directly into contact with the didactic nature of this kind of talk. The infrequent occurrence of repair of this kind has highlighted once again the flexibility of the labelling routine, such that the task facing the child may be tailored to maximise success, and so to minimise repair on the child's lexical choice. The few instances where a child's choice of label DOES need reparative attention, have not supported Schegloff et al.'s suggestion that adult-child interaction might prove to furnish an exception to the pervasive preference for self- over other-correction in interactive talk. While other-correction has been attested in this data, nonetheless each instance of its occurrence has been accountable in rather special terms, leaving us with a picture of repair organisation in which a regular preference for self-correction is, at least, quite feasible. However, it has been interesting to consider the forms of repair initiation which are, and are not, employed in this data. The adult, as has been seen, never repeats a 'wrong' label after the child. Adult labelling utterances, that is to say, are confined to the production of appropriate labels. It was suggested

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<sup>37</sup>Consideration of this issue raises the intricate problem of establishing just what counts as an 'x' and a 'y': in other words, when are two utterances versions of 'the same thing' and when are they not? It seems that a 'replacement' turn - a 'y' turn following an 'x' turn - is used in the corpus to carry out phonetic, rather than lexical, repair work. In such cases 'x' and 'y' turns may be lexically 'the same thing', but phonetically different objects. This issue will be taken up in more detail in Chapter Five.

above that this stability of the status of adult labels may reduce the analytical work required by the child in interpreting an adult 'repeat'. And it is of interest, further, that repair initiations by the adult, even when they withhold correction and invite self-correction by the child, are nonetheless particularly powerful in locating the child's error; and that straightforward 'replacement corrections', whose status AS corrections may not be immediately apparent, are avoided. While other-correction may be dispreferred in this data as elsewhere in talk, it may be that the didactic nature of this kind of interaction is partially realised by a particularly self-explicit design of repair-INITIATION.

This section has been concerned with instances of repair on lexical matters in the child's talk. But just as there are means by which the adult displays to the child that her or his choice of label was in some way problematic, there must also be ways in which the child receives indication that that choice was acceptable and needs no further attending to. The following section will explore the options available to the adult for receipting a child's label so as to treat it as a lexically acceptable utterance.

#### **4.4 NON-REPAIR OF LEXICAL MATTERS**

It has already been indicated that a child's labelling utterances can be identified differently according to their sequential position. A distinction can be drawn between, on the one hand, child labels produced either in response to an adult elicitation or on the child's orientation to a next picture; and, on the other, child labels produced in response to a prompting label from the adult, whether this prompt opens a sequence or follows some type of failed elicitation. Once the adult has uttered the target label, any child productions of that label become a particular order of object: they are not displays of lexical knowledge, but of articulatory skill and the ability to imitate. And any receipt or further work carried out on them will treat them as such.



Sequences involving this kind of articulatory task will be examined in some detail in Chapter Five.

In this section, attention will be restricted to the outcome of a child's labelling attempts which can be seen (by their following an eliciting question or opening a sequence) to be presented as displays of lexical knowledge - as moves in the labelling game. First, the pervasiveness of third turn receipts in labelling sequences will be considered, and then attention will be given to the design of these receipts.

#### **4.4.i The Pervasiveness Of Third Turn Receipts**

A notable feature of picture labelling sequences is that almost all child utterances hearable as labelling turns, where repair is not initiated, are receipted in next turn by the adult. In other words, part three of the three part structure identified in Chapter Three -

1. Elicitation
2. Label
3. Receipt

- is overwhelmingly present. In this way, these sequences correspond to the tight three-part structure typical of other testing and instructional sequences. These receipts mark the adult's eliciting question as having been an 'exam' question - one to which the adult already had the correct answer available - and since such receipts occur equally after elicited labels and 'spontaneous' ones, they reinforce the notion that such child 'initiations' in fact constitute 'part 2' turns, in a structure where 'part 1' has undergone ellipsis.

There are 70 sequences in the corpus in which a child's utterance can be identified as a 'labelling move' of some kind. Of these, 10 have next turn repair work initiated on them, and 53 are receipted by the adult in next turn. Examples of sequences

displaying repair in next turn to the child's label were examined in the last section. A typical example of a sequence displaying an adult third turn receipt is the following:

(76) <sup>38</sup> (CC)

adult:        go:h what's ((points)) that =  
child:        = [bɜ:a]  
→ adult:     b:i:ke ye:s

Of the 70 child labelling moves in the corpus, just 7 are not followed by either repair initiation or a receipt in next turn. What is more, in 3 of those 7 cases, the child's following actions are consistent with a display of anticipation of this kind of response. The absence of an adult receipt, in other words, can be seen to be an absence which the child orients to. In the following two cases, non-receipt is followed by the child producing a repaired version of the label which was met with non-response:

(77) (50)

adult :       mn yea traa:ctor yes 'n' what's  
                that

(.)

child :       [t<sub>0</sub><sup>j</sup>i:ç:t<sub>0</sub><sup>w</sup>a p k<sup>wx</sup>]

→                             (0.7)

→ child :       [k<sup>wx</sup>p k<sup>x</sup>]  
                            t<sub>+</sub>

(78) (SO)

adult : 't 're tho:se  
(1.9)  
child : [n<sup>2</sup>k'gə.ʔt̪əʔ]  
→ (0.5)  
→ child : [g<sup>ə</sup>.e.ɪ<sup>2</sup>t̪j, {sɪj}  
adult : {g:rape(h)

<sup>38</sup>This is the opening of extract (2).

In both cases there is a pause (0.7 and 0.5 seconds) after the child's first version. Since adult receipts of child labels are typically produced swiftly in next turn without delay (notice the next positioning of the labelling and receipt turns in (76), and the overlap in the last two turns in (78)), this pause may be influential in suggesting to the child that his prior turn was problematic in some way, and in prompting him to repair it. Of course, there is no indication given to the child in this situation as to what aspect of his turn is repairable. In (77), he effects a repair on his lexical choice (*tick tock*), while still using a form which is appropriate to the same referent (*clock*). In (78), he effects phonetic repair from [n<sup>2</sup>k<sup>1</sup>gə.ʔ<sup>2</sup>ɛ<sup>6</sup>] to [g<sup>5</sup>ɐ̃.e.ɪ<sup>2</sup>ɛ<sup>2</sup>ɪ<sup>2</sup> sɪ]; specifically, introducing labiodentality in the opening consonantal portion, and frontness and unroundedness through the vocalic portion.

No strong claim can be made from these two examples, however, that it is the absence of an adult response which is prompting the child to self-repair. The child may be prompted to repair simply by a self-monitoring of his own turns. Nonetheless, the fact that receipts are routinely produced without delay lends weight to the suggestion that the pause in these sequences may have some part to play in the child's decision to repair now and here. More weight is lent by the following extract:

(79) (50)

(7.3)

child : [P<sub>+</sub>α::I<sub>5</sub> d<sup>θ</sup>β<sub>+</sub>α<sub>+</sub>θ<sub>+</sub>I s<sup>j</sup>] (.) [bλs<sup>j</sup>]

(1.0)

child : bi:k::e

$$\rightarrow (1.8)$$

→ child : bu:t i:s a bi:ke (.) {·hhh

```
adult :                               {it is a
```

bike ye:s

Here, the child's first turn occurs after a lengthy silence. The turn is largely unintelligible, although the last part of it sounds very much like a version of *bus*.



This may be a first attempt at the labelling task at hand, although it is quite likely that it is a comment on traffic passing outside. Whichever it is, it is not an appropriate label, and it doesn't receive a receipt from the adult. After a second's silence, the child produces what is unmistakably a label, *bike*. When this receives no response from the adult after 1.8 seconds, the child produces a remonstration which asserts the appropriacy of his prior turn, *but is a bike*. The adult confirms the claim of this turn with an acknowledgement (*it is a bike yes*) (although, interestingly, she doesn't address the issue, which it seems is being pointed to by the child's turn, of how her earlier lack of acknowledgement has been interpreted). So it seems as if the child may orient to a lack of acknowledgement from the adult as displaying a perceived difficulty with his turn, even when he refutes that difficulty. In other words, he can remonstrate against the inference being drawn from an adult's non-response.

Of the seven cases in the corpus, then, where a child's labelling turn is not met with a receipt (or repair initiation) in next turn, three carry evidence which suggests that the child is orienting to the absence of such a receipt. And the remaining four cases can, I think, each be accounted for in rather special terms. In three of them, the child's labelling turn overlaps, to some degree, with the adult's own talk. These three cases will be considered in turn:

(80) (S0)

child :       ·h hhh hhh

(0.6)

child :       ·h {ə ɹ'ng:e =

adult :       { () }

adult :       = what's this

(0.9)

child :       [<sup>m</sup>bəɪə·ɪ<sup>2</sup>ə<sup>2</sup>ɔ:<sup>ə</sup>dʒ: ]

adult :       orang:e yes

The child's labelling turn (*orange*) is followed, not by a receipt, but by an eliciting question from the adult, produced in latched position to the end of the child's turn. However, almost simultaneous with the opening of the child's labelling turn there has been a very short vocalisation from the adult which appears to be an earlier bid to take that turn, which has been withheld in face of the child's having begun to speak. At the point when the child produces his label, then, the adult is in 'speaker orientation', which may well result in her not being in a position to monitor his turn sufficiently to receipt it, while still being sensitive enough to that turn's occurrence to hold off her next for its duration. Similar features may account for the lack of adult receipt in extract (42) which was presented in Chapter Three:

- (42) (SO)
- |   |         |               |
|---|---------|---------------|
|   | child : | [tʰ h::]      |
|   |         | (2.2)         |
| → | child : | ·mtk ·h p{ea: |
| → | adult : | { 't's i-     |
|   |         | (4.7)         |
|   | child : | ( )           |

Again, the adult begins an eliciting question almost simultaneously with the child's production of a label. Her sensitivity to the child's having taken a turn appears to be displayed in her cut-off of that question ('t's i-), but, as in (80), her state of 'speaker orientation' when the label was uttered may account for the absence of an acknowledgement turn.

The third case of this kind is (81):

- (81)<sup>39</sup> (SO)
- |   |         |                               |
|---|---------|-------------------------------|
| → | adult : | ri:gh {t                      |
| → | child : | { [kʰa·p̚ p̚ <sup>(h)</sup> ] |
|   |         | (0.5)                         |

---

<sup>39</sup>This is the opening of extract (44).

adult : 's look in your book what's tha:t

The child's labelling turn, *carrot*, overlaps slightly with an adult utterance, *right*, which forms part of a preliminary sequence (*right 's look in your book*) preceding her eliciting question, *what's that*. After the child's turn, there is half a second's silence, and no receipt: instead the adult continues with her preliminary sequence, in a similar way to her retaking of the turn in (80). Not only is the adult in speaker orientation here, she is opening the activity of picture book labelling, as this sequence opens this particular bout of labelling activity. A child label in such a position, then, is premature, and may be legitimately treated as such by the adult. The adult's *right 's look in your book* is the signal which marks the participants' transition into the labelling game. By being temporally placed just a little before that signal has been given, the child's turn fails to be awarded the status of a legitimate move in that game.

In these three cases, then, consideration of the sequential placement of the child's labelling turns in respect of the adult's ongoing actions can provide an account for the absence of an adult receipt. The one remaining instance of the seven in the corpus where a child's labelling turn is not explicitly acknowledged is the following:

(82) (TA)

|           |                                           |     |     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| adult :   | °the <u>re</u> <u>tha:t</u> 's right°     | (.) | ·hh |
|           | <u>a:nd</u> <u>wha:t</u> 's <u>tha:t</u>  |     |     |
| child :   | <u>g:i:r:aff:e</u>                        |     |     |
| → adult : | <u>a::nd</u> <u>wha:t</u> 's <u>tha:t</u> |     |     |

After the child's label, *giraffe*, the adult moves directly to a next elicitation, *and what's that*. The way in which such a turn, on the face of it an elicitation, appears to be able to do the work of affirmation, hinges on the use of *and*. As was seen in Chapter Three, adult elicitations in these sequences are often built with *and*, which constructs those elicitations as members of a series, and also marks their position in



structure as being adjacently next to what came before. The adult's turn in (82) following the child's label, follows that label without any pause; the *and* is loud with a very long vocalic portion; and its pitch is level and in mid-range. Prosodically and sequentially, then, *and* is marked. It may very well be by means of these features that a kind of ellipsis, this time of the third part of the *elicitation- label- receipt* sequence, is signalled.<sup>40</sup> And by there being no explicit receipt, it can be noted, an acceptance (rather than a rejection) of the child's label is implied. This sequence, then, appears to present a case of acceptance by default.

### Summary

This subsection has demonstrated that a pervasive feature of picture book labelling sequences is that a child's label is routinely receipted by a following adult turn. In this way, an adult's prior access to what counts as a 'correct' labelling move is evidenced, and these sequences are marked as being 'instructional'. Out of 70 labelling moves in the corpus, only seven were seen to receive no adult receipt in next turn - and each of those cases display features consistent with the suggestion that a third position receipt is part of this talk's structural design. In only one case ((82)) is the adult's acceptance or rejection of the child's label (in this case acceptance) implicitly given. Parallels, then, can be drawn with the design of repair initiations considered in the previous section. Just as an adult's rejection of a child's choice of label by repair initiation is often made particularly explicit, so in the 53 instances where a child's choice of label is deemed appropriate, this appropriacy is explicitly signalled by an adult's receipting turn. In what follows, the design characteristics of these receipting turns will be given more detailed attention. It will be seen that the choice made by the adult between different turn designs for the accomplishment of this receipting work can have significant implications for the trajectory of the talk which follows.

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<sup>40</sup>Of course, it is impossible to know, from the audio record of this sequence, whether or not the adult may have given some non-verbal signal, such as a nod, that affirmed the child's turn.

#### 4.4.ii The Design Of Third Turn Receipts

The affirming receipts which follow the vast majority of all child labels in the corpus are accomplished in one of three basic turn shapes, which differ according to whether or not they contain a) a version of the child's label, and b) a confirmation marker like *yes*. Firstly, there are a very few cases where the adult receipts the child's label with a turn which consists simply of a confirmation marker (*yes* , *that's right* , *mm hm*).

An example is (9):

(9) (TA)

adult:            wha:t:'s: that

(1.8)

child:            e:lephant =

→ adult:            = (hh) 'a:t's ri:ght

However, in the overwhelming majority of cases (all but four), an adult's affirming turn carries a version of the label which the child has, or is deemed to have, produced. The largest set of these are turns which carry a version of the label AND a confirmation marker of some kind (*x yes; x yea; x that's right; x that's it yes; mm yeah x yes; x that's a clever girl; x good boy*). An example from this set is the following:

(83) (TA)

|   |         |                             |
|---|---------|-----------------------------|
|   | child : | h <u>e</u> d:geh <u>o</u> g |
| → | adult : | hedgehog ye:s               |

And in a third set of cases, there is no confirmation marker of any kind, but simply a version of the label. (84) supplies an example:

(84) (TA)

adult : o{ oh } who's that

child : { [ĕh] }

(1.0)

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{child} : & \text{li: on} \\ \rightarrow \text{adult} : & \underline{\text{li: i: : on}} \\ & (5.0) \\ \text{child} : & \text{°norah°} \end{array}$$

It can be established, then, that overwhelmingly, adults receipt a child's labelling turns, and routinely, they do so with turns which incorporate a version of the child's label. As the second and third of the sets distinguished here account for all but four instances of affirmation of a child's labelling turn in the corpus, these two turn shape options in particular, and some of the differences between them, are worthy of consideration.

## Sequence-finality

An important characteristic of the affirmations falling into the second set outlined above, those which incorporate both a version of the label and a confirmation marker of some kind, is that regularly they are sequence-terminating turns. In order to illustrate this, it will be illuminating to compare these sequences with some falling into the third set, in which the adult's affirming turn (consisting simply of a label) is followed by a further version of the label from the child. An example of this kind of sequence was seen in extract (3):

(3) (TT)

|   |        |                                    |
|---|--------|------------------------------------|
|   | child: | [t <sup>h</sup> ɔ̃dr̥əθ]           |
| → | adult: | <u>tee:th</u>                      |
| → | child: | [t <sub>i</sub> :jə <sup>h</sup> ] |

The child's turn here, although phonetically deviant, is hearably a version of *teeth*. The adult receipts this turn with a version of the label, and this turn is followed by a child turn which makes another attempt at articulating the label. These sequences will be explored in more phonetic detail in the following chapter: here, I wish simply to observe that to follow an adult's receipt with a further version of the label is an



option which the child sometimes takes up. But it is an option which the child never takes up following an adult receipt which carries a confirmation marker. In this sense, this second set of affirmations can be said to be sequence-final: they regularly mark the end of any given labelling issue.

The terminal character of 'label + confirmation marker' receipts can be illustrated, firstly, by noting that the adult can follow up such a turn with some elaborating comment on the picture, as happens in the sequence which was opened in (83):

(85) (TA)

child : hed:gehog

adult : hedgehog ye:s

(.)

→ adult : 's nice isn' it we could make a

→ pott:r'y hedgehog like that

The adult's comment, *'s nice isn' it we could make a pott'ry hedgehog like that*, signals the labelling business to be over for that particular picture. At other times, the adult's beginning to disattend to a particular picture on uttering this kind of affirming turn is displayed by accompanying non-verbal behaviour, such as pointing and page-turning:

(86) (CC)

adult :        ta:ble yea 'n' ((points)) what's  
                 that  
                 (0.8)

child :        [t͡ɕ̚] ((throwing hands down to  
                 1  
                 sides))

→ adult :        chai:r ye:s ((turning page))  
→                   (0.7)

→ adult :        ooh what's that

Here, the adult begins to turn the page (of a one-picture-a-page book) during his turn (*chair yes*). And the sequence-final nature of these turns is unambiguously displayed

when the adult tacks a next elicitation on to this kind of affirmation, within a single turn, as in the first line of the extract.

These kinds of evidence illustrate that these turns are sequence-final for the adult. And there is evidence, too, that the child may also be orienting to their terminal status. After the adult's second turn in (86) there is 0.7 seconds pause (during which the adult is turning the page). This provides a space in which the child could have opted to take another turn, such as a further version of *chair*. The fact that she doesn't do this is consistent with a claim that the adult's *chair yes* marks for her, as it does for the adult, the end of the labelling sequence.

In the following extract there is a slightly shorter pause of 0.4 seconds after the adult's turn:

(87) (SO)

|         |                                                                                                                            |  |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| adult : | what's this                                                                                                                |  |
|         | (0.6)                                                                                                                      |  |
| child : | bus:: ((sound of vehicle                                                                                                   |  |
|         | outside))                                                                                                                  |  |
|         | (1.2)                                                                                                                      |  |
| child : | [t <sup>h</sup> :t <sup>j</sup> ɹ p t <sup>j</sup> θ <sup>v</sup> ɹ <sup>k</sup> t <sup>j</sup> h p {t <sup>j</sup> }      |  |
| adult : | {tra:ctor ·h                                                                                                               |  |
|         | ye:s                                                                                                                       |  |
| →       | (0.4)                                                                                                                      |  |
| child : | ·hhh (.) [ə <sup>f</sup> ::z <sup>g</sup> :ə <sup>z</sup> w <sup>ɛ</sup> ɪ <sup>k</sup> w <sup>x</sup> q <sup>o</sup> ::θ] |  |

Again, it can be noted that the child could, but doesn't, produce more labelling talk in this position. And furthermore, it is the child who takes the next turn, with a labelling utterance (*there's a car*) which moves the talk on to a next labelling sequence.

In the following extract, the child follows the adult's affirming turn immediately with a turn which opens a new sequence:

(88)<sup>41</sup> (TA)

child : what's this  
 adult : w'll you tell me what is it =  
 child : = i:sland  
 adult : i:sland yes =  
 → child : = what's this

There is considerable evidence, then, to support the contention that both adult and child orient to an adult's receipting turn which carries a confirmation marker along with a version of the label as ending the particular labelling issue which they are engaged in. In over 30 cases of this kind of receipting turn in the corpus, there is just one instance where the child follows the adult's turn with what could be heard as a further attempt at the label:

(89) (TA)

adult : o:h 'n' who's that  
 child : there's [nɔ̃vɛh]  
 → adult : the:re's [nɔ̃və] ye:s  
 → child : there's [nɔ̃və]  
 adult : that's [nɔ̃ɔ:p] (.) and [nɔ̃:vɛ]  
 (1.2)  
 adult : n having a cuddle aren't they

After the adult's receipting turn, *there's norah yes*, the child takes a turn which appears to be a further attempt at articulating the label. If this turn is another attempt at *there's norah*, then it is apparent that it is a repaired attempt, since certain features bring his articulation more in line with the adult's version. Specifically, there is more rounding in the first vocalic portion, and a more central quality at the end of the utterance. It is possible, then, that the child is here not orienting to the adult's turn as implicating the end of the labelling sequence, but is treating it as a model on which to base a repaired attempt at the articulation of his label. However, it is also possible

<sup>41</sup>Part of this extract is represented in extracts (53) and (57) in Chapter Three.



that his turn, *there's* [nɔ̣və], is not a repaired attempt at *there's norah*. In the picture there are two figures, one who should appropriately be labelled *Norah*, and one who should appropriately be labelled *Noah*. The child has already, in this picture book reading session, displayed some confusion over the two names, and has produced [nʌ<sup>ə</sup>vɛh] for a picture of Noah.<sup>42</sup> It is quite possible, then, that his turn *there's* [nɔ̣və], which follows the adult's receipt, is addressing the second figure in the picture, and has as its target *there's noah*. The increased roundedness, [ɔ̣], (in comparison with his first version) is consistent with this, and so is the opening of the approximation at syllable juncture [ṿ]. And the adult certainly seems to treat his turn in this way, by clarifying the distinction between the two labels, *that's noah and norah*. This one apparent counter-example, then, to a highly recurrent pattern whereby 'x + confirmation marker' turns terminate labelling sequences, could be said to carry little weight.

By contrast with these 'x + confirmation marker' turns, those adult receipts which fall into the third set, and consist simply of a version of the child's label, can be seen to be less restrictive in terms of their sequential implications. On occasion, this kind of turn can, like those just considered, end the sequence of talk about a particular label. (84) is such an example:

- (84) (TA)
- |           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| adult :   | o{ oh } who's that |
| child :   | { [ɛ̃h] }          |
|           | (1.0)              |
| child :   | li:ɔn              |
| → adult : | l:i:i:ɔn           |
|           | (5.0)              |
| child :   | °norah°            |

---

<sup>42</sup>See extract (69).

However, these turns can also be followed by a further version of the label from the child, as was seen in extract (3) above:

(3) (TT)

|          |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| child:   | [t̚ <sup>h</sup> ɔ̣dɪ.əθ]           |
| adult:   | <u>tɛɛ</u> :th                      |
| → child: | [t̚ <sub>ɪ</sub> :jə <sup>h</sup> ] |

The differences between these two possibilities will be explored further in the following chapter, when issues pertaining to the accomplishment of phonetic repair work in these sequences are addressed. The point to be made here is to offer an account for why those adult turns which appear to act as models on which the child may base a further attempt at a label, are being treated in this analysis as affirmations - as turns which receipt a labelling offer and treat it as having been appropriate.

**The relationship between lexical and phonetic work**

The point is that, in all those cases where the child responds to an adult's version of her or his label with a further labelling attempt, that attempt is a version of the SAME label. In other words, the child may undertake PHONETIC repair work on a label in response to such a turn, but LEXICAL repair work is never undertaken in this position. In examples like (3), the child's second attempt at a label is never an attempt at a different word:

(3) (TT)

|          |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| child:   | [t̚ <sup>h</sup> ɔ̣dɪ.əθ]           |
| adult:   | <u>tɛɛ</u> :th                      |
| → child: | [t̚ <sub>ɪ</sub> :jə <sup>h</sup> ] |

The significance of this is that an adult's turn which produces a version of a label which the child has just produced, whatever it may be indicating to the child about the pronunciation of that label, is still indicating that, lexically, that turn was appropriate.

It is affirming, in other words, the child's lexical choice, and accepting that particular labelling move as having been adequate AS a labelling move. It has already been seen that one particular design of sequences which invite self-correction, documented for other kinds of interaction, is not used to initiate repair on the child's choice of label. That design is the following:

|         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| child : | x         |
| adult : | x (or x?) |

When repair is initiated on lexical choice this work is not accomplished, as was seen in the previous section, with a repeat of the child's label. And when a child's label is repeated, this kind of turn does not initiate repair on lexical choice. It may initiate repair on the child's articulation of that particular label - but it can still be seen as a receipt of the label, which indicates to the child that no further LABELLING work (i.e. searching for an appropriate word) is required.

#### 4.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has built upon the outline which was given to the design of picture labelling sequences in Chapter Three, and has focussed on one particular kind of 'working on talk' evidenced in this setting - work on lexical aspects of the child's labelling utterances. Since a child's turns in labelling sequences are predominantly built as displays of lexical knowledge, and evaluated in lexical terms, this kind of work is at the heart of the didacticism which is inherent in labelling talk. Two complementary kinds of work - repair and non-repair work - have been investigated, in recognition of the fact that both positive and negative evaluations of a child's labelling attempts need to be signalled in some way to the child.

Recourse has first of all been made to the model for the organisation of repair in conversation presented by Schegloff et al. (1977), and in particular the suggestion



made by these researchers that in adult-child interaction one might expect to find less of a constraint on other-correction (that is, an adult's corrections of a child's utterances), than is pervasively the case in other kinds of talk. However, examination of the corpus has supplied no evidence to support this kind of marked pattern: instead, by means of a comparison with other strategies for repair documented for other kinds of talk, it has become apparent that repair in labelling talk is marked by a particularly self-explicit design of repair initiation.

Considering the ways in which correction is effected on the child's choice of label, by whichever party, points up the complexity of repair in general and correction in particular. A correction *y* of a preceding utterance *x* needs to do two, apparently contradictory, kinds of work. It needs to display itself as different from *x*, different enough to warrant being proffered as a 'replacement' at all - not to be hearable, that is, as an imitation of *x*. At the same time it needs to bear enough similarity to *x* to be heard to fill the same slot that *x* filled, to be speaking in place of *x*, and not to be an independent contribution to the exchange. That is to say, it needs to be not just different, but CONTRASTIVE. Contrastivity may be characterised as a display of difference with shared points of reference, a difference which is nonetheless displayed to be, on some level, 'the same thing'.

In section 4.3.iii, one format for repair which was found NOT to be used in this data for working on the child's choice of labels was the following:

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| child : | x |
| adult : | y |

In such a format, the correction *y* is, by its nature, different from *x*. But it is not explicitly marked as being contrastive with *x*.<sup>43</sup> One way, though, of marking *y* as doing contrastive work, is to explicitly juxtapose *x* and *y* in a contrastive relationship:

child :        *x*  
adult :        not *x* but *y*

And this is the format which is used on those occasions when the adult corrects the child's lexical error:

(73) (TA)

adult :        =no it's not a bl:ue car i-  
                 COW it's a WOMAN c(h)o:w

(74) (TA)

adult :        noah no tha:ts not norah  
                 tha:t's n::o:ah

It would seem, then, that the adult here is selecting a particular correction format which highlights the contrastivity inherent in the action.<sup>44</sup> And in section 4.3.iii it was also seen that the options chosen by the adult for INVITING THE CHILD TO SELF-CORRECT were similarly selective. For example, a format for invitation to self-correct, documented for other kinds of talk, but absent from this data, was the following:

child :        *x*  
adult :        *x?*

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<sup>43</sup>It would be interesting to investigate the ways in which corrections in this format in other kinds of talk employ prosodic cues to mark contrastivity. However, such cues are not employed here.

<sup>44</sup>Here, contrastivity is being considered in terms of the syntactic design of turns. Contrastivity can also, of course, be marked prosodically. Local (1992b) has identified a configuration of prosodic features associated with self-repairs in adult-adult talk. These are an increase in loudness and a pitch higher than that of the preceding talk with a falling contour. In Chapter Five these features will be seen to be associated with other-correction in the labelling data. Likewise here it can be noted that in (73) and (74), *woman* and *noah* are produced more loudly than the preceding talk, and with a wide rise-fall pitch contour.

Here it can be noticed that this kind of adult turn (a repeat of the child's label) does little in the way of marking contrastivity. It merely highlights the child's turn for a monitoring: it neither rejects it nor points to the existence of a replacement. Of course, this kind of turn is not a CORRECTION, but rather an invitation to correct, and therefore it might be thought misguided to look for contrastivity in it. However, consider the ways in which the adult invites correction (on the child's choice of label) in the picture book data:

(72) (TA)

adult :     n:o   that's   the   rhi:noceros  
              that's   the -

(90) <sup>45</sup> (TA)

adult : = that's a man cow and  
tha:t's a-

Here, while the adult is not doing the work of correction, she can be seen to be providing the contrastive frame for the child's own correction. The adult, then, appears to opt to initiate repair in a particularly direct and self-explicit way, by drawing attention to the contrastivity which repair entails, and by doing this even when not actually providing a correction but when inviting correction from the child.

A further feature of labelling sequences which has been highlighted in this chapter arises from consideration of those instances where a child's labels are affirmed rather than repaired. Here it was found that an adult receipt in third turn position in a labelling sequence is a pervasive feature of labelling design. This kind of turn, well-documented in 'instructional' styles of talk, may be considered a feature of didactic interaction, both because it awards the child's labelling utterances the status of a performance, and also because it displays the adult to have had prior access to the answers to her or his own eliciting questions.

<sup>45</sup>This is taken from extract (70).



These two findings - the explicit design of repair initiation and the prevalence of a third turn receipt - when taken together begin to suggest an underlying characteristic of this talk which further contributes to its instructional character. If repair initiations are couched in a particularly explicit design, the child has less work to do in monitoring her or his own productions to identify the problem within them which has motivated repair. Similarly, the prevalence of a third position receipt means that, rather than a child's errors being sometimes allowed to pass unattended, all of the child's labelling attempts are either repaired or explicitly affirmed. That is to say, they are monitored and evaluated by the adult. In both cases, opportunities for self-monitoring on the part of the child are reduced.

While the preference organisation surrounding correction appears to be no different in this talk from elsewhere, then, it may be that there is instead a difference in the preference organisation surrounding INITIATION of repair. While in ordinary talk between adults there is a preference for self-initiation of repair, such that opportunities are presented for the speaker of a repairable to instigate remedial action, and opportunities for some other to instigate that action are routinely passed over,<sup>46</sup> here it has been seen that opportunities for the child to initiate repair on her or his own utterances are largely forestalled by virtue of the pervasiveness of an adult's receipting turn in third position in sequence. It may well be that differences in the preference organisation of repair initiation, and not of correction itself, are characteristic of didactic styles of interaction.

The issues explored here will be taken up and considered in more depth in Chapter Six, where the findings from the analysis of picture labelling talk presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five will be summarised and assessed. First, however, the following chapter is addressed to a further kind of 'working on talk' which is

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<sup>46</sup>See Schegloff et al. 1977.

evidenced in the picture labelling data. Here, the focus of attention is on sequences where it is phonetic aspects of the child's labelling utterances which are at issue.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **WORKING ON TALK: PHONETIC MATTERS**

#### **IN PICTURE BOOK LABELLING**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the last chapter, some of the ways in which lexical aspects of the child's labelling talk are worked on were outlined. This chapter gives attention to a second area of linguistic work which is made an option in labelling talk - rehearsal and refinement of the child's articulatory skills. The chapter will first of all deal with two preliminary issues, by clarifying a distinction between two kinds of labelling sequence evidenced in the data, and by drawing attention to the inherent ordering of lexical and phonetic work. Consideration will then be given to the design of phonetic repair sequences, in section 5.3. This section will take the form of an investigative and detailed progression through some data extracts, in order to uncover the ways in which an adult's repeating turn in these sequences is displayed to do two quite different kinds of interactional work. Finally, in section 5.4, attention will be given to the means by which an adult engaged in a labelling sequence may SUPPRESS reparative articulations on the part of the child.

### **5.2 PRELIMINARIES**

#### **5.2.i Imitation Sequences Versus Lexical Display Sequences**

It has already been indicated in earlier chapters that in some sequences in the picture book labelling data, it is the adult who is the first to produce the target label. Some sequences are opened by this kind of adult turn, as exemplified by the following, which represents the opening of extract (4):



(91) (TT)  
 → adult: °quee:n°  
 (.)  
 child: [ɹʔ<sub>i</sub>˜n]

Routinely, in these cases, as in (91), the child follows the adult's turn with a version of the label. Indeed, the adult can display an anticipation of such a child turn, and explicitly request it:

(92)<sup>47</sup> (TT)  
 adult : is that daddy's °wa:tch°(h)  
 (1.1)  
 → adult : say wa:tch

Clearly, such a sequence does not test a child's lexical knowledge. It is not requiring the child to find a word to match the pictorial referent. Rather, by requiring the child to imitate an adult model, these sequences are testing the child's articulatory ability. A child's labels in this sequential position have a particular status. Rather than being true labelling moves, they are displays of articulatory skill and the ability to imitate. They will therefore be referred to here as 'imitation sequences', in contrast to the 'lexical display sequences' which result in labelling proper on the part of the child.

A child's labels will have this status of imitations wherever in a sequence the adult has been the first to articulate the target label. This situation arises, as has been seen, where the adult's elicitation of a labelling move fails, and is followed up by a prompting turn carrying the target label. In these cases, too, the adult's labelling turn may be followed by a child imitation of the label:

---

<sup>47</sup>This is the opening of extract (48), represented without transcription of pitch.

(93)<sup>48</sup> (CC)

adult :       ·hh 'n' what's that

(0.6)

child :       ((turns to look at adult)) [p̥ɑ]

→ adult :     ((looking at child))·h[k<sup>w</sup><sub>ɔ̃</sub>·k<sup>n</sup><sub>ə̃</sub>·]

(0.7)

→ child :     ((looking back at book)) [d̥<sup>w</sup><sub>ɔ̃</sub>d̥<sup>v</sup><sub>ɔ̃</sub>θ]

adult :       ((moving point)) clever gi:rl (.)

'n' what are them

Similarly, when the adult corrects the child's choice of label (and hence is the first to produce the target label in the sequence), it has been seen that the child regularly follows the adult's correction with a version of the correct label:

(68) (TA)

adult : that's a man cow and tha:t's  
a-

(.)

child : [b<sup>ə</sup><sub>u</sub>:k<sup>h</sup>g.v]=

adult : =no it's not a bl:ue car i-

→ COW it's a WOMAN c(h)o:w

→ child : a woma:n cow

adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t

And again, when these prompts and corrections fail to elicit a child imitation, the adult may explicitly display that this kind of turn is expected:

(94)<sup>49</sup> (CC)

adult : tree ye:s (.) and what is that

child : ((signs)) [tʰd̃y.ə]

adult : hou:se

(1.8)

→ adult : what is it =

child : = [həp̃w]

<sup>48</sup>This is extract (63), represented without transcription of pitch.

<sup>49</sup>This is an extension of extract (59), represented without transcription of pitch.

→ adult : what's he called=  
child :  $= [G \partial^{\theta w} \xi h]$

In addition, phonetic work may be initiated on a child's label which is a genuine labelling move, presented in such a sequential position as to give it the status of a display of lexical knowledge. The child may, in a labelling turn, have produced the right word, but the adult may be prompted by some perceived inadequacy in the articulation of that word to require the child to have another go at it. This is what happens in a sequence like extract (3):

child: [t<sup>h</sup><sub>±</sub>adr.əθ]  
adult: tee:th  
child: [t<sub>±</sub>i:jə<sup>h</sup>]

<sup>50</sup>This is part of extract (69).



phonetic matters is an option in both kinds of labelling sequence. This is a consequence of the structural design of picture book labelling talk. In most sequences the child performs a display of lexical knowledge. The outcome of this is that the child produces a version of the target label, since even when the child's labelling attempt is subject to correction by the adult, it has been seen that the child ends up producing a version of the correct label. Alternatively, the adult can choose not to require a display of lexical knowledge but can instead present the child with an imitating task, as in extract (91).<sup>51</sup> The outcome of this is that, once again, the child ends up producing a version of the target label. Given, then, that these sequences, whichever way they turn out, have as a design feature that the child has a go at articulating the target label, the way is open for work to be performed on that articulation - both repair work and affirmative work.

**5.2.ii The Ordering Of Lexical And Phonetic Work**

It is worth making note at this point that work on the two different aspects of the child's performance, lexical knowledge and articulatory skill, is necessarily ordered, with articulatory work never preceding lexical work on any given label. That is to say, in a sequence like (67), where the child's lexical choice is problematic, articulatory work is not enacted on his wrong label:

- (67) (TA)
- 1

adult :

a:nd what's that
- 2

(3.3)
- 3

child :

[b<sub>u</sub>·ɪd<sub>ə</sub>ŋ<sub>ə</sub>·ʔ<sub>u</sub>əv<sub>ə</sub>s<sup>j</sup>]
- 4

(.)
- 5

→

adult :

n:o that's the rhi:noceros that's
- 6

→

the-
- 7

(1.7)
- 8

child :

[ɪd<sub>ɛ</sub>p<sup>h</sup>ɔd:v·m:{ə()}]
- 9

adult :

{(hh)hippopota(h)mus

<sup>51</sup> As has already been suggested, it would seem that the choice between these alternatives is just one way in which the adult can tailor the demands of the activity to the child's linguistic abilities.

It would be strange indeed if, following the child's somewhat wayward articulation in line 3, [b̥a·ɪd̥ə·n̥ə·t̥ʃəv̥əs], the adult were to invite phonetic refinement from the child with a modelling turn *rhinoceros* or *say rhinoceros* before initiating lexical repair as in lines 5-6 with a turn which signalled that *rhinoceros* was, in fact, the wrong word. Articulatory work, in other words, is only enacted on lexically appropriate labels.

The design of this articulatory repair work will be explored through detailed analysis of some repair sequences throughout the following section.

### 5.3 REPAIR OF PHONETIC MATTERS

#### 5.3.i Identifying Phonetic Repair

In parallel with the discussion of lexical repair sequences in Chapter Four, a consideration of phonetic repair sequences in this section opens with an indication of the twofold difficulties faced in identifying instances of phonetic repair. First, there are problems to be faced by the analyst, in deciding when a second version of an utterance counts as a phonetically repaired version of that utterance. This kind of problem is illustrated briefly below. Secondly, and more importantly, a significant problem is posed for the child, in recognising when an adult's receipt is directed towards reparation rather than affirmation. This potential problem is illustrated in the later part of this subsection, and provides the impetus for the in-depth analysis of a handful of data extracts with which the remainder of this section is concerned.

#### Repair versus non-reparative repetition

While phonetic repair work on the child's turns is generally, in the corpus, initiated by the adult, there are a few cases which indicate that the child may initiate phonetic

repair on her or his own productions, apparently without any prompt or other indication from the adult that this is being invited. That is to say, phonetic improvements in the child's articulations may be self-initiated. One of the problems, however, of analysing data from children of this age, is that there are no hard and fast criteria for distinguishing instances of this kind of self-initiated self-repair, from instances where a child produces a second version of an utterance which has no clear motivational origin in a critical monitoring of the first version. Young children play with sounds and repeat their utterances: one cannot necessarily claim that a young child giving a second version of some utterance has been motivated to do this by any sense of inadequacy pertaining to that first utterance - even when the second utterance can be judged as being, by some adult standard, an 'improved' version.

The following extract provides an example of this kind of repetition in the child's talk, which cannot straightforwardly be identified as an instance of repair. The child's utterances between lines 7 and 9 seem to contain three versions of the label *train*. These utterances, although they are interposed by turns from the adult, appear, by virtue of their pitch contour, rhythm and tempo, to constitute a single turn:

(96)<sup>52</sup> (SO)

- |   |           |                                                                                                    |         |
|---|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | adult :   | orang:e°yes°[ə:h:]right wh{at's                                                                    |         |
|   |           | $\underbrace{\quad\quad\quad}_{\text{ingressive}} \underbrace{\quad\quad\quad}_{\text{whispered}}$ | {       |
| 2 | child :   |                                                                                                    | { [²ēh] |
| 3 | adult :   | ·hh what's that                                                                                    |         |
| 4 |           | (0.5)                                                                                              |         |
| 5 | child :   | [ɸ·dʒv° ɸ·tə]                                                                                      |         |
| 6 |           | (0.8)                                                                                              |         |
| 7 | → child : | [tʰv°e:I] =                                                                                        |         |
| 8 | adult :   | = tra{in                                                                                           |         |
| 9 | → child : | { [tʰeɪp]θ°vē·I]·h [∫°vēēI]=                                                                       |         |

<sup>52</sup>This is an extension of extract (22).



|    |         |                  |
|----|---------|------------------|
| 10 | adult : | = traɪ{n         |
| 11 | child : | {[ɕʔvɪ]          |
| 12 |         | (0.7)            |
| 13 | child : | [ʃvẽĩ]           |
|    |         | < <sub>↑</sub> > |

There is no indication that the child is orienting to the adult's versions of *train*, which seem quite expertly fitted around the child's monologue, so as to occur just after those parts of it which come closest to being a hearable version of *train*. Similarly, there is no clear indication that the child is engaging in phonetic repair across these utterances. One can point to the nasalisation at the end of the child's utterance in line 9, and note that nasalisation was absent in line 7. However, at the beginning of this version there is neither closure nor alveolarity - two features which mark the opening of both the line 7 version and the adult form. We have here a series of disparate versions of a label from a child, but it is by no means clear that we have an instance of repair.

### Phonetic repair versus lexical affirmation

While there are a few similar cases in the corpus where one might indeed wish to suggest that the child is engaged in making articulatory improvements on the basis of a self-monitoring of a first attempt, the vast majority of instances of phonetic repair on the child's labels in the data are initiated by the adult. These adult repair initiations are regularly accomplished with a particular design of turn - a turn which comprises a version of the label which the child has produced. An example is the following:

|                    |         |                                         |
|--------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| (97) <sup>53</sup> | (TT)    |                                         |
|                    | child : | [t <sup>h</sup> <sub>ɹ̥</sub> ɹ̥dɪ·ə θ] |
| →                  | adult : | [t <sup>h</sup> <sub>ɹ̥</sub> ɹ̥:ə θ]   |
|                    | child : | [t <sub>ɹ̥</sub> ɹ̥:jə <sup>h</sup> ]   |
|                    |         | (.)                                     |
|                    | adult : | where's <u>th</u> omas's <u>tee</u> :th |

<sup>53</sup>This is an extension of extract (3) with more phonetic detail.

This observation - that the adult regularly instigates reparative action on a child's articulations with this particular kind of a turn - is intriguing, since just this kind of a turn has been seen also to be employed in the termination of labelling sequences. In 4.4.ii, the following extract was presented to exemplify the employment of an adult repeat as a sequence-terminating receipt - a signal, in other words, that the child's utterance needs no further attending to:

(84) (TA)

|   |         |                                  |
|---|---------|----------------------------------|
|   | adult : | o{ oh } who's <u>th<u>a</u>t</u> |
|   | child : | { [ɛh] }                         |
|   |         | (1.0)                            |
|   | child : | li: <u>on</u>                    |
| → | adult : | <u>li: i: i: on</u>              |
|   |         | (5.0)                            |
|   | child : | °norah°                          |

An adult repeat in third turn position in a labelling sequence can therefore do two quite contradictory kinds of work. In cases like (84), it does the work of an affirming receipt which puts an end to the sequence. In cases like (97), it is followed by a further child version - a version which is phonetically repaired. In other words, the adult's turn is treated by the child as a model, which encourages a further attempt at the label. In some instances, then, an adult repeat serves to affirm and terminate; in others, it provides a basis for reparative attempts.

The intriguing question posed by this, concerns just how an adult's repeat of a child's label is displayed to do these two different kinds of work. How are these two kinds of repeats distinguished in their design, such that the child may appropriately infer their implications? Put another way, just how is phonetic repair work on the child's labelling utterances understood, intersubjectively, to be a relevant next action in the talk, and thus how is this kind of work collaboratively achieved?

These are the questions which the remainder of this section will address, through a detailed examination of a small number of sequences which have different kinds of evidence to lend to the investigation. First, a further two sequences comparable to (97), where an adult repeat is met with phonetic repair on the part of the child, will be presented, and the nature of the repair evidenced in all three sequences will be explored.

### 5.3.ii Some Examples Of Phonetic Repair Sequences

The three extracts to be examined here all take the following shape:-

|         |                              |
|---------|------------------------------|
| child : | label                        |
| adult : | repeated label               |
| child : | phonetically repaired label. |

The first example is (97), which has already been presented:

|      |         |                                         |
|------|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| (97) | (TT)    |                                         |
| →    | child : | [t <sup>h</sup> <sub>ɹ̥</sub> adɪəθ]    |
| →    | adult : | [t <sup>h</sup> i: <sub>i</sub> əθ]     |
| →    | child : | [t <sub>i</sub> :jə <sup>h</sup> ]      |
|      |         | (.)                                     |
|      | adult : | where's <u>th</u> omas's <u>tee</u> :th |

The child's first attempt here is phonetically quite deviant from the adult form, particularly in having an open and front vocalic portion after the utterance's consonantal beginning, and in having alveolar closure in the middle of the utterance. The later vocalic portion, [ɪ̞.ə], corresponds quite closely to the vocalic portion in the adult form, in beginning with a close, front, unrounded quality which becomes centralised - although it begins less front and less close than the adult's form, and more swiftly takes on a central quality. The child's second attempt brings his version



more closely in line with the adult's. This time there is no alveolarity and no closure in the middle of the utterance, and the vocalic portion begins more close and more front. The duration of this utterance is also brought into line with that of the adult's version.

**A second example is the following:**

- (98) (TT)
- child : [p'ξ̃<sup>θ</sup> ɽ:tʃi]
- (1.2)
- adult : [p<sup>h</sup>ξ̃ n·s·ə<sup>θ</sup>ɽ]
- (.)
- child : [p̥ξ̃<sub>+</sub> ɽ·θ<sup>w</sup>]
- (.)
- adult : good boy

Here, the most striking difference between the child's two utterances is the introduction of alveolar friction, [s·], in the middle of the child's second version, in place of glottal and alveolar closure, [ɹ:ɫ]. This second version also comes into line with the adult's, by having a vocalic portion at the end with a central quality and with lip-roundedness, where the ending of the first version was characterised by unroundedness and a more front quality. The differences between the child's first attempt and the adult model in this sequence can usefully be seen in terms of differences in 'phasing', in the sense of Kelly and Local (1989b). In the middle part of the child's first version, [p'ɛ̃<sup>̃</sup>ɹ:ɫɿ̃], there is nasality [ɛ̃<sup>̃</sup>], closure [ɹ:ɫ], alveolarity [ɫ] and friction [ɿ̃]. In the adult model, there is, likewise, nasality and closure [ŋ·], and alveolarity and friction [s·]. It is in the relative phasing of these features that the two versions differ. What the child is doing in producing his second version, [pʌ̃<sup>̃</sup>ɹs·ɐ̃], consists, in large part, in rearranging the phasing relationships between these features.

And a third example is (99):

|      |         |                                          |
|------|---------|------------------------------------------|
| (99) | (TT)    |                                          |
| →    | child : | [m̃ d̃ɛ̃ <sup>h</sup> ]                  |
| →    | adult : | [ɛ̃ p̃ <sup>a</sup> m̃.ɛ̃ <sup>h</sup> ] |
| →    | child : | [ɛ̃ ñɲ̃ɛ̃]                              |
|      |         | (0.7)                                    |
|      | adult : | say in:se:ct                             |

In this example, the child's final version is quite deviant from the adult form. Nonetheless, improvements can still be seen when it is compared to his first version. Both versions are characterised by nasality and closure (as is the adult form), but whereas in the first version nasality and closure co-occur at the beginning of the utterance, in the second they co-occur (in line with the adult form) at syllable juncture. In comparison with the first version, the vocalic qualities in the second are more central. These vocalic qualities correspond closely to what is found in the adult's version, although in the sequencing of these two vocalic portions the child's utterance is deviant.

These three examples, then, illustrate a pattern whereby a child's second attempt which follows an adult repeat is not only hearably different from the first attempt - but different by virtue of being closer to the adult version. That is to say, phonetic repair has taken place. The issue to be tackled, then, is to assess whether this reparative action on the part of the child is being projected or invited by some feature of the adult's repeat. As a first approach, these sequences will be compared with a second set - cases where an adult repeat of a child's label does not result in a further attempt by the child.

### 5.3.iii Some Examples Without Repair

Two sequences to be presented here follow this kind of a pattern, where no repair work ensues:

child : label  
 adult: repeat  
 (no repair work).

(100) (TT)

→ child : [d<sup>jw</sup><sub>ɹ</sub>·<sup>ə</sup>k']

→ adult : [dʒ<sup>ə</sup><sub>ɹ</sub>·g<sup>h</sup>]  
 (.)

child : [d<sub>ɹ</sub>anɪʔ·dz<sup>u</sup><sub>ə</sub>·k']

adult : is that ja:net's i:ug

Here the child clearly does not treat the adult version as a model for improving his performance: he moves straight on to elaborate on the picture (*janet jug*).

In considering this sequence it might be noted that the child and adult versions have many phonetic similarities. Both begin with closure, alveolarity, palatality and voice, and have orality throughout. The vocalic portion of the two versions is very similar in both quality and length, and at the end of both utterances there is velar closure with no or little voicing, and with markedly audible release. One very plausible possibility, then, is that the child in this sequence is able to hear for himself that no repair is necessary, on the basis of perceiving the lack of discrepancy between the two turns. This claim would lead to the converse suggestion that in those sequences where the child does produce a second version, this repair work is motivated by the child's own monitoring of the differences between her or his own production and the adult model.

However, the following example, which follows the same format, casts doubt on this kind of claim:



(101) (TT)

→ child :  $[\overset{1}{\underset{+}{d}}\overset{1}{a}\overset{1}{\partial}e\cdot]$   
 → adult :  $[|p\cdot d\theta\cdot^{\sim}]$

(0.8) ((sound of turning  
pages))

child :  $[\underset{\sim}{d}\underset{\sim}{a}\cdot g^1]$

Again the child does not take the adult repeat as a model: he goes on, after a pause in which pages are turned, to label the next picture. But here the phonetics of the two versions are hearably different. At the beginning of the child's version there is glottal closure and palatal approximation: there is no alveolarity or laterality. The first vocalic portion ends up close and front, and in the middle of the utterance there is friction and dentality, and neither the closure or alveolarity which characterise the adult's version. The second vocalic portion has a front, unrounded quality, unlike the adult's. Phonetic repair work, then, is hearably an option. One might expect any monitoring of the two turns by the child to point up marked, repairable articulatory differences. However, repair is an option which is not taken up in this sequence.

In (100) and (101), then, we have two cases where an adult repeat is not treated by the child as a model for repair - one case where the child's version conforms closely to the adult's, and a second where the child's version is hearably repairable. However, it is apparent that instances such as these have limited evidence to lend to an investigation into the different kinds of work accomplished by adult repeats in this sequential position. The problem with examples such as (100) and (101) is that they do not eliminate the possibility that repair work was being in some way projected by the adult's turn, but happened not to result simply because the child, for whatever reason, chose not to take up that option. In (101), there is some evidence to support the notion that the adult, as well as the child, is orienting to the sequence-final nature of her own labelling turn, in that the sound of page turning follows swiftly from the end of this turn, before there has been an opportunity for a further child version.

However, this very feature may, in preference to any implicit characteristic of the adult's turn, be the feature (or at least a contributing factor) which signals sequence-termination to the child. In (100), there are no clues as to whether or not the adult expected a further version from the child. A simple comparison, then, of sequences where the child follows an adult repeat with self-repair, and sequences where the child does not do this, does not supply us with the kind of evidence that we need to make claims about the status which these turns have for the adult.

In the following subsection, a sequence will be examined which carries just the kind of evidence which is lacking in the two sequences considered here.

#### 5.3.iv Uncovering The Sequential Implications Of An Adult's Repeat: An Example

The following sequence is to provide the basis for analysis in this subsection. As will be seen, it is a sequence which gives ground to analytical claims which have not been possible in the sequences considered thus far.

(102) (TT)

- |   |           |                                                                                                                                                   |
|---|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | child :   | $\frac{\frac{\frac{\quad}{\quad}}{\quad}}{[d_{\frac{1}{2}}gI.]}$                                                                                  |
| 2 | adult :   | $\frac{\frac{\frac{\quad}{\quad}}{\quad}}{[m\tilde{\theta}^{\circ} \quad ^h\downarrow m\tilde{\theta}\eta \cdot k^{\frac{1}{2}}_{\frac{1}{2}}.]}$ |
| 3 | child :   | $\frac{\frac{\quad}{\quad}}{[p\tilde{r}^{\circ} \eta]}$                                                                                           |
| 4 | → adult : | $\frac{\frac{\frac{\quad}{\quad}}{\quad}}{\text{say } [m\tilde{\theta}\eta k^{\frac{1}{2}}]}$                                                     |
| 5 | child :   | $\frac{\frac{\frac{\quad}{\quad}}{\quad}}{[\tilde{m} \tilde{\theta} kI.(\eta)]}$                                                                  |
| 6 | adult :   | $\frac{\frac{\frac{\quad}{\quad}}{\quad}}{[m\tilde{\theta}\eta k^{\frac{1}{2}}]}$                                                                 |



In this extract, the adult's version of the label in line 2 is not followed by a further child version. The child's utterance [pɪ ɪ] in line 3 is short and produced high in the pitch range, and whatever its signification it is quite clearly not any kind of acceptable version of *monkey*. Of particular significance, however, for the investigation at hand, is the adult's response to this turn in line 4, *say monkey*. With this kind of a turn, which explicitly prompts the child to repeat the label, the adult displays orientation to the absence of a child version in line 3, and can be heard to be spelling out the sequential implications of her earlier turn in line 2. Hence, this turn supplies evidence that the adult's label in line 2 was indeed intended as a model. Analysis of this sequence can therefore proceed with good grounds for an assumption that the adult's labelling turn in this case represents, not an affirmation which projects the end of the sequence, but an invitation to self-correct.

Investigation can therefore turn to the design of the turn which is accomplishing this work. In this case, the turn is marked by a 'false start'. The adult breaks off in the middle of a production of *monkey* - and then goes on to produce the word in full. Interestingly, when she does this, the adult changes no aspect of the articulatory phonetics of the utterance: the first part of the word when it is uttered in full turns out to be just the same, in articulatory terms, as it had been when it was broken off. Now while it has been demonstrated (Schegloff et al. 1977 : 363) that there need not be hearable error for repair to take place in talk, it is nonetheless striking that, while these two versions are articulatorily similar, they differ quite markedly in their pitch contour. While the original utterance started with a mid-to-low fall, the repaired version starts high, rises, and falls to low. A candidate analysis for this shape of turn, then, is that it represents an instance of a repair in pitch.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>The concept of a repair in pitch is one which presents a particular difficulty for analysis. The difficulty lies in positing prosodic features as the OBJECT of repair when they are themselves the VEHICLE of that repair, since the work of correction seems often to be marked by particular prosodic patterns. Mention was made in Chapter Four of Local's (1992b: 295) observations of certain prosodic



In order to come some way towards uncovering the motivation for a repair in pitch in this position, it will be informative to consider the interactional work which each of the adult's two versions in this turn, differentiated in their prosodic design, appears to be directed towards. It has already been suggested that the second, repaired version of *monkey* is presented as a model, projecting a further version from the child. This is suggested by the adult's turn, *say monkey*, in line 4, which is produced when such a child version is not forthcoming. It can be observed that this work is here accomplished with a version of the label which has a high rise-fall pitch contour which falls to low - a pitch contour which stands in contrast to that of the child's labelling turn in line 1 (a low to high rise), to which it is addressed. It may be, then, that this second adult version is marked as inviting a further child attempt (that is, as doing corrective work) by virtue of the contrastivity which it shows in relation to the child's version, and that an important part of this work of contrastivity is carried by the pitch contour.

The adult's first, interrupted, version of *monkey*, on the other hand, begins with a low fall - displaying, as far as it goes, no prosodic contrastivity with the child version. While it is of course impossible to predict the melodic shape which this utterance was taking before it was broken off, a compelling possibility, suggested by other sequences in the corpus, is that this first version was on course to follow the pitch

---

features associated with SELF-corrections (within a turn), whereby the correction is routinely "produced louder than the preceding talk and with a higher pitch which falls". All of these features are evident in the adult's second *monkey* in line 2, and it may be that they are characteristic of correction more generally. However, the difficulty lies in ruling out the alternative possibility which might be suggested here - that these prosodic features in the second part of the turn are themselves doing some self-corrective work, and are involved in correcting the broken-off utterance which immediately precedes the full version of *monkey* in the same turn. Nonetheless, I think this possibility CAN be ruled out in this case, on the basis of other prosodic properties of the turn. Local observes that the self-corrections in his data are also marked by a change in rhythm and tempo, such that speakers accelerate and arrive at a repaired version with a syncopated timing. Line 2 in extract (102), on the other hand, comes off quite differently. At the transition from cut-off to the full version of *monkey*, there is a slow, audible voiceless release of velar closure during inbreath, with a slight pause before the full version. In rhythm and tempo, then, this turn is not characteristic of an interruptive self-correction (and this is supported by the absence of any repair in articulation across the two versions). It is therefore consistent to suggest that prosodic features here are the OBJECT of repair.

contour of the child's version. The following is a sequence where just this kind of pitch matching happens:

(103) (TT)

(1.4) ((sound of pages))

|         |                                                                                                        |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| child : | <div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div>[ b̥ɔ̃ bʌ̃.ɪ ]</div><div><div></div><div></div></div></div> |
| adult : | <div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div>[ b̥.ɔ̃:θɪ ]</div><div><div></div><div></div></div></div>   |

(1.8) ((sound of pages))

In this sequence, the adult's turn, matching the rising pitch contour of the child's version, comes off, not as an initiation of repair inviting a second attempt by the child, but as an affirming receipt which ends the sequence and is followed by page-turning to a next labelling event.

Of course, the suggestion that the adult's broken off *monkey* in line 2 of extract (102) was the start of an affirming receipt of the kind evidenced in (103) is conjecture. However, it is conjecture which is supported by other details of the sequence. Presented with a picture of a monkey, the child has produced [d̥ə̃.ɪ]. Such a turn may well be hearable at first as an attempt, albeit phonetically wayward, of the target label *monkey*. As such it might invite affirmation. Now, whether or not the child was indeed producing a version of *monkey*, his utterance [d̥ə̃.ɪ] could also be heard as a version of the wrong label, namely *doggie*. And a slight delay in that second hearing, on the part of the adult, who may have first heard the child's utterance as lexically appropriate if phonetically deviant, could motivate just the kind of repair from an affirming receipt to an invitation to correct, which is being suggested here.



Contrastivity

The point which arises from analysis of this extract is that an adult repeat of a child's label which invites reparative work on that label from the child (and essentially amounts to correction) is marked as such by doing some work of CONTRASTIVITY in relation to the child label. As was seen in the previous chapter, in relation to lexical matters in labelling talk, correction in talk amounts to the replacing of an object *x* with an object *y*, and in order for this to be accomplished, some kind of contrastivity must be displayed. If one hears the child's turn in line 1 of this sequence as being a version of *doggie*, then one can argue that the adult's following turn is marked as a lexical correction by being lexically contrastive. *Doggie* is replaced with *monkey*. However, it would appear that lexical contrastivity alone may not be sufficient to signal that correction is being done. The adult's *monkey* is marked AS being lexically contrastive by virtue of also being PROSODICALLY contrastive with the child's turn. The details of this sequence, in comparison with those of (103), suggest that an absence of prosodic contrastivity in such a position would eliminate lexical contrastivity - would treat the child's *x*, that is, as having in fact been an instance of *y*.

To support this, attention can be drawn to the end of extract (102), where there is a further instance of an adult repeat of the child's label:

|            |           |                                                                                                                                  |
|------------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (102) (TT) |           |                                                                                                                                  |
| 1          | child :   | <div><div></div><div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div>[d̥ə̃·gɪ̃]</div></div>         |
| 2          | adult :   | <div><div></div><div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div>[mẽʔ ʰh↓ mẽŋ·kʰɪ̃]</div></div> |
| 3          | child :   | <div><div></div><div><div></div></div></div> <div>[ɐ̃ɪ̃ʔ]</div>                                                                  |
| 4          | adult :   | <div><div></div><div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div>say [mẽŋkʰɪ̃]</div></div>      |
| 5          | → child : | <div><div></div><div><div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div></div></div><div>[mẽ̃ ɐ̃ kɪ̃·(ʔ)]</div></div>   |





adult :        where's thomas's tee:th

It has already been seen how the articulation of the child's turn differs from the adult's subsequent model: the adult's turn, in other words, displays phonetic contrastivity in articulatory terms. But in addition, it may be noted that the pitch contour of the child and adult turns stands in contrast. While the child's first version has a rise-fall contour in mid range, the adult's begins level and high, and falls to low (as does the child's subsequent version).

Correction status may be marked in part, then, by lexical or articulatory phonetic contrastivity (as the adult corrects the child's choice of word or the child's pronunciation), but the preceding examples show how this contrastivity may be highlighted and interpreted by prosodic contrastivity, and specifically by contrastivity in pitch. Pitch contrastivity, then, can be pointed to as one feature which is associated with adult repeats which invite phonetic repair work on the part of the child.

Other sequences in the corpus, however, show that the child may sometimes produce a phonetically repaired version of a label following an adult repeat which does not display this kind of contrastivity in its prosodic relationship to the child's turn. These sequences will be explored in the following subsection.

### **5.3.v Repair Without Prosodic Contrastivity**

Analysis in this subsection will focus on some extracts which suggest that pitch contrastivity is not a feature of all adult repeats which invite phonetic repair from the child. The starting-point for analysis here is the following extract which, in rather the same way as extract (102) above, provides the analyst with a warrant for treating the adult's repeat as an invitation to the child to self-correct.

(105)<sup>57</sup> (TT)

|    |           |                                        |
|----|-----------|----------------------------------------|
| 1  | adult :   | $\overline{\overline{[kwə·əñ]}}$<br>p. |
| 2  |           | (.)                                    |
| 3  | child :   | $\overline{\overline{[pʲi:ñ]}}$<br>f   |
| 4  |           | (1.2)                                  |
| 5  | adult :   | $\overline{\overline{[kwə:ñ]}}$<br>p.  |
| 6  | child :   | yea                                    |
| 7  | → adult : | say it                                 |
| 8  | child :   | $\overline{\overline{[pʲi:ñ]}}$<br>f   |
| 9  |           | (.)                                    |
| 10 | adult :   | thomas say it                          |
| 11 |           | (1.0)                                  |
| 12 | child :   | $\overline{\overline{[ki:ñ·]}}$        |
| 13 | adult :   | $\overline{\overline{[kwə·əñ]}}$<br>p. |
| 14 |           | (1.1) ((sound of pages))               |

This sequence is initiated with an adult production of the target label. After the child's attempt in line 3, the adult repeats the label and the child responds with *yea*. The adult responds to this with a prompt, *say it*. Two particular points can be illustrated off this response. In the first place, it reinforces the observation made in Chapter Three that even those picture labelling sequences which open with the adult producing the target label are designed in such a way as to invite a child rendition of that label: *yea* is treated as an insufficient response. Secondly, *say it* suggests that the repeat which came before it was intended as a prompt or model. In just the same way as the adult's *say monkey* in extract (102) was seen to do, the adult's *say it* here

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<sup>57</sup>This is an extension of extract (4) with more phonetic detail.



can be seen to spell out for the child the sequential implications of a prior turn which has not been met with an acceptable response. Once again, then, a warrant is drawn for treating the adult repeat (in this case the adult's *queen* in line 5) as a correction/model/prompt - at all events a turn which, for the adult, projects a further version from the child.

The adult repeat in extract (105) thus looks to be accomplishing similar work to the repeats in (102) and (104). Unlike those examples, however, there is no evidence of pitch contrastivity at work in this sequence. A similar pitch contour - a rise or fall-rise which starts mid or low and rises to high - is common to all versions of *queen* uttered by both participants. However, a feature of the repeat in line 5 which attracts attention is its timing. Rather than following immediately from the child's version, it follows a 1.2 second pause. The remainder of this subsection will be addressed to building a case for the significance of this kind of temporal delay as a feature of some adult repeats which project phonetic repair work.

### **Temporal Delay**

Three pieces of evidence will be presented to support the suggestion that the timing of these repeats may play a part in the interactional work which they accomplish. The first derives from a comparison of the repeat in line 5 of extract (105) with the ending of that sequence, at lines 12 and 13. Here, the child produces a version of the label which is met with an adult repeat. This repeat, like that at line 5, matches the rising pitch of the child turn which precedes it. Unlike the adult repeat at line 5, however, it follows directly from that child turn, without delay. This adult turn in line 13 does not invite child repair. It ends the sequence and coincides with the start of page turning to a next label, and thus comes off as an affirmation. One feature which distinguishes the adult turns in lines 5 and 13, in the absence of any salient difference in the pitch relationships which they hold with their priors, is their temporal placement in relation to those prior turns. It is therefore feasible to propose that this

feature is associated with the differential interactional work which the two adult turns are seen to be doing.

A second piece of evidence to bring to bear on this claim is found by returning to the second of the three example sequences with which this section opened. The second sequence presented there to display an instance of phonetic repair work was the following:

(106)<sup>58</sup>

(TT)

$$\frac{\frac{\sim}{\frac{\sim}{[p' \tilde{\xi} \tilde{\rho} : t \{ \ddot{i} ]}}}{\rightarrow \text{child :}}}$$

→

(1.2)

→

adult :

$$\frac{\frac{\sim}{\frac{\sim}{[p^h \tilde{\xi} n \cdot s \cdot \underline{\theta} + ]}}}{\rightarrow}$$

(.)

child :

$$\frac{\frac{\sim}{\frac{\sim}{[p \tilde{\alpha} \tilde{\alpha} s \cdot \underline{\theta} \sim ]}}}{\rightarrow}$$

(.)

adult :

good boy

Again, as in (105), there is no clear contrastivity displayed here in the pitch configuration of the labelling turns of child and adult in lines 1 and 3, both being produced with a short mid or mid-to-low fall, followed by a rise to high. But, just as was the case in (105), the adult's repeat follows a 1.2 second pause.

A third, and final, piece of evidence derives from the following sequence. This sequence is a little more messy, on account of some latching and overlap, but here too, as in (105), there are two instances of adult repeats of child labels - one which is preceded by a pause and appears to come off as a model, and one which follows its

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<sup>58</sup>This is extract (98) with additional transcription of pitch.

prior turn directly and comes off as an affirmation. As was the case in (105) and (106), the pitch configuration across all labelling turns is similar:

(107) (TT)

|    |    |         |                                        |
|----|----|---------|----------------------------------------|
| 1  |    |         | (1.1)                                  |
| 2  |    | child : | $[\theta^I e s \cdot \xi I]$           |
| 3  |    |         | (0.6)                                  |
| 4  |    | adult : | $[\mu I \cdot \eta : g]$               |
| 5  | 1→ | child : | $[j I \cdot \tilde{\eta}]$             |
| 6  | 1→ |         | (0.7)                                  |
| 7  | 1→ | adult : | $[\mu I \cdot \tilde{i} \eta : g] =$   |
| 8  |    | child : | = what                                 |
| 9  |    |         | (0.6)                                  |
| 10 | 2→ | child : | $\{ [j \tilde{i} \eta] \cdot k^h \} =$ |
| 11 |    | adult : | $\{ (what) \}$                         |
| 12 | 2→ | adult : | = $[\mu I \cdot \eta : g]$             |
| 13 |    |         | (2.2)                                  |
| 14 |    | adult : | $[\neq]$ su-                           |

The adult's opening label in line 4<sup>59</sup> is met with a child version in line 5. After a pause of 0.7 seconds the adult repeats the label. This turn is not accompanied by page turning and does not appear to orient to a completed sequence. Although the child does not immediately produce a repaired version of his label, producing instead a turn which sounds like *what*, it can be noted that the adult waits until he DOES repair his label (after a further 0.6 seconds) before she takes another full turn. In line 11, an

<sup>59</sup>The signification of the child's turn in line 2 is unclear. However, it is patently not a version of the target label, *ring*.



adult turn which appears to begin with *what* is broken off to give way to the child's repaired label. There is evidence here too, then, that an adult label which follows a child label and a pause is one which is presented as a model to project further work. By contrast, the adult's version of *ring* in line 12 coincides with the turning of pages, is followed by a next labelling sequence, and comes off as an affirmation. And far from being delayed, it is latched to its prior. In other words, it follows directly from the child's turn without even minimal pause.

These three sequences, then, support the contention that the timing of an adult repeat may be a salient factor in distinguishing the interactional work which it does. In considering the length of the pauses which precede these repeats, it is interesting to note that Jefferson (1989) has identified a possible 'metric' for conversation which allows for a 'standard maximum' silence of approximately one second. That is to say, a pause of around one second appears regularly to represent a kind of tolerance level beyond which speakers will attend to that pause as signifying something problematic and will undertake some kind of remedial activity. A particularly clear example from her data is the following:

```
[W:PC:III:1:1] (telephone)
Sue :      Hello:~h
                        (1.0)
Sue :      Hello::,hh
```

On the basis of hundreds of similar examples, Jefferson suggests that there may be a systematicity to the occurrence of pauses in talk which measure around 0.9 to 1.2 seconds. With this in mind, it is apparent that the pauses in the sequences considered above, measuring 1.2, 1.2 and 0.7 seconds, cluster (loosely) around this one second figure.

Now, just what may be made of this in the context of the present data is unclear. One may want to suggest, for instance, that a pause of this length is being treated here by the adult as indicating that an option available to the child for initiating self-repair on a prior turn is not being taken up, and thus is giving the adult warrant to initiate repair her- or himself. In support of this, it can be noted that in those couple of instances in the corpus where it does seem as if the child might be undertaking articulatory repair uninvited, such repairs are carried out well within this time frame. However, if these repeats were to be viewed as corrections<sup>60</sup> which are simply delayed to provide an opportunity first for self-initiated correction, it might still be expected that the correction when it happens would carry certain prosodic characteristics associated with repair. We might expect high, falling pitch and loudness. In fact these turns all match the rising pitch of their priors, and are not noticeably louder than the surrounding talk. The way they come off is not as corrections, but as RE-ELICITATIONS. By avoiding doing contrastivity, and by being delayed, they appear to 'try again' - to give the child an opportunity to have another go - without explicitly indicating that the child's first attempt was problematic. In this way, they seem to manage the work of repair in an 'embedded' fashion.<sup>61</sup> They present as a phenomenon which is somewhat akin to the "prosodic disguise" of self-repair identified by Local (1992b), and the "prosodic camouflage" of repair (in rhythmic terms) identified by Couper-Kuhlen (1989). In line with the differential status already noted between lexical and phonetic repair work in this data, it is consistent to propose that while initiations of lexical repair are typically achieved in a direct, self-explicit format, initiations of phonetic work may, by virtue of being framed as re-elicitations, be embedded and disguised.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>An 'invitation to self-correct' of this kind amounts to a correction, since the adult, in articulating the label, supplies the correct version.

<sup>61</sup>See Jefferson 1987 for explication of the notion of 'embedded correction'. This notion will be explored in more detail in relation to non-labelling talk in Chapter Six.

<sup>62</sup>It is worth noting that initiation of lexical repair is never achieved in the corpus with a 're-elicitation'.



### **5.3.vi Phonetic Repair: Summary And Concluding Remarks**

This section has considered some of the ways in which repair of phonetic matters in labelling talk is managed. It has done this by following a specific investigative path, in attempting to tease out the means by which two complementary kinds of interactional work - repair initiation and affirmation/sequence termination - are accomplished by a superficially similar class of objects - adult repeats of a child's labelling attempts. This section has therefore served to illustrate the procedures involved in data analysis of this kind.

While the investigation began with a comparison of sequences involving phonetic repair with sequences not involving phonetic repair, it was found that these sequences provided scant evidence on which to base analytical claims. However, recourse to further sequences provided just the kind of participant-oriented warrant which is required in this kind of analysis, for revealing the sequential implications of a turn at talk. Analysis was thus able to proceed through uncovering the phonetic exponents of a known interactional object.

Two particular features have been identified here as associated with those adult repeats which are reparative in orientation. These are, first, a contrastive prosodic relationship with the child turn which they follow, expressed most noticeably in pitch; and, second, a temporal delay in relation to that child turn. The first of these features, the employment of prosodic contrastivity to enhance and underline the contrastivity inherent in the act of correction, may be a feature of correction as found more widely in talk. The findings of Local (1992b) in relation to self-corrections are suggestive of this, but further research is needed in the area of the prosodic details of interactive talk to establish whether this is the case. Nonetheless it would seem that it is a feature which may here serve to distinguish for the child between those repeats which are corrective and those which are affirmatory.



The second feature associated with some of the corrective repeats investigated in this section, the feature of temporal delay, suggests that on occasion phonetic repair initiations can be particularly subtle. By avoiding pitch contrastivity, and delaying the repeat, the adult appears to bring off what is essentially a reparative action as a re-elicitation. In this way, the child's error is passed over, and not explicitly pointed to. With reference to the findings presented in Chapter Four, it can be noted that this is in direct contrast to the way in which reparative actions in relation to lexical errors in labelling talk are managed.

The following section will continue the line of investigation opened here, by considering the incidence of non-repair - those occasions on which a child's articulations are allowed to stand. First, however, the third of the three phonetic repair sequences with which this section opened will be reconsidered briefly, since no account has as yet been put forward for the management of repair work in this sequence:

(108)<sup>63</sup> (TT)

→

child :

[m̃ d̃<sub>g</sub>·<sup>h</sup>]

→

adult :

[p̃<sup>h</sup> m̃· d̃<sup>h</sup>]

→

child :

[ñ ñ<sub>g</sub> p̃<sub>g</sub>]

(0.7)

adult :

say in:se:ct

In light of the discussion presented in this section, it can be seen that here is an example of an adult repeat which is followed by phonetic repair work on the part of the child, but which displays neither contrastivity in pitch nor temporal delay. A mid-to-low fall or mid level pitch, followed by a rise to high, marks all three occurrences

<sup>63</sup>This is extract (99) with additional transcription of pitch.

of the label, and there are no pauses between the three turns. How, then, does the adult's turn manage to project a further child attempt?

This example serves as an important reminder that repair work of this kind is not NECESSARILY going to be projected by any feature of the adult's receipting turn. The child has the capacity, also, to initiate phonetic repair off her or his own bat, simply by monitoring the phonetic differences between a first version and an adult repeat, whatever that repeat is designed to project. There is, after all, nothing in this sequence to suggest that the adult is expecting a further child version, as there was in sequences like (102), (105), (106) and (107). It may well be that in (108) the child is engaging in just this kind of self-motivated repair.

The following section examines the converse of phonetic repair - the options available to the adult for NOT projecting further articulations from the child in a labelling sequence.

## **5.4 NON-REPAIR OF PHONETIC MATTERS**

### **5.4.i Introduction**

The preceding section outlined some of the ways in which repair work on phonetic aspects of the child's labels is undertaken. It also, in doing so, illustrated some instances where the adult seemed able to indicate to the child by a particular choice of turn that no further phonetic work was required. Just as there are ways of displaying to the child that her or his choice of label is appropriate, alongside ways of initiating repair on lexical choice, so there must also be, alongside techniques for initiating phonetic repair work, means available to the adult for indicating that the child's articulation of the target label is acceptable (for now at least) and requires no further refinement.

While the question of acceptability in the area of lexical choice is a relatively clear cut matter (on the whole the child either has or has not produced the 'right' word), in the area of pronunciation acceptability is a much more flexible notion. This is not only because what counts as 'right' phonetically is much more of a subjective matter, but also because the whole issue of the child's articulation may be something which the adult chooses not, at any given point, to address. If the child produces an appropriate label in a deviant way the adult may opt to pursue phonetic refinement in the ways outlined in the preceding section. But the adult may equally opt to leave for now the issue of the child's articulation of the label, and simply receipt it as having been acceptable on lexical grounds.

This section will explore the ways in which the adult may opt out of addressing articulatory issues in the child's labelling turns, by drawing comparisons with the articulatory repair sequences presented in the preceding section. First, however, a preliminary distinction will be drawn between the design of lexical display sequences and that of imitation sequences.

#### **5.4.ii Imitation Sequences**

At the beginning of this chapter, a distinction was made between two kinds of labelling sequence - 'lexical display sequences', where the task presented to the child is one of finding an appropriate lexical item, and 'imitation sequences', where the adult is the first to produce the appropriate label, so that the task which the child is presented with is the articulatory one of imitating the adult's utterance. The focus of this section will be on the ways in which 'non-repair' is achieved in lexical display sequences, but first a few observations need to be made about those sequences in which it is the adult who first produces the target label.

To begin with, in imitation sequences repair work is rarely enacted on the child's articulation. In other words, when the adult initiates a sequence by supplying the



label and requiring the child to articulate it in imitation, the child is rarely required to refine that articulation.<sup>64</sup> Typically, in these sequences, rehearsal of the label on the part of the child is not pursued beyond one child attempt. This is exemplified in the following extract:

(109) <sup>65</sup> (TT)

1 adult : w:a:tch  
2 (0.6)  
3 child : [vp·ə<sub>↓</sub>·<sup>2</sup>t<sub>5</sub>]  
4 (1.2)  
5 adult : [ɫ] an' a x:-r:a:y  
6 (1.1)  
7 child : [j<sup>r</sup>ä:ẽ<sub>+</sub>]  
8 (.)  
9 adult : and a va:cht:  
10 (0.7)  
11 child : [hẽ:p<sub>2</sub>]  
12 (0.8)  
13 adult : and a  
14 (0.7)

It is unclear whether or not the child's turn in line 7 is a version of *x-ray*. If it is, it is phonetically wayward, yet it is not attended to as such by the adult with any turn which might invite continued work on its articulation. Instead, the adult moves directly to the initiation of a next labelling sequence with *and a yacht*. And if the child's turn in line 7 is not a version of *x-ray*, then it is interesting that no such version is pursued. Either way, the demands made on the child in this kind of sequence are less stringent than those of sequences initiated by other kinds of adult elicitation, where an appropriate child label may be pursued over several turns. Similarly, the

<sup>64</sup>Sequences like (105), investigated in the previous section, where this does happen, are rare in the corpus.

<sup>65</sup>This is an extension of extract (40).

child's turn in line 11 of this extract is not followed up by any explicit invitation to refinement. Instead, the adult moves on to a next labelling issue.

It should not be surprising that those sequences, such as the above, which present an imitative task to the child, are less demanding of the child's performance than those sequences which elicit genuine labelling - not only through withholding the task of naming from the child, but also by means of the limited phonetic practice which they generate. It has already been suggested that those labels which the adult opts to produce first off in a sequence may well be ones which she or he has some warrant (such as knowing them to be new words for the child) for believing that the child may be unable to access. In most cases the child is required to imitate the adult - to produce one version of the label - and this may be an important part of the learning process if these are indeed new words. However, extensive rehearsal is not a feature of these sequences.

A further observation about sequences opened in this way is that child labels which carry the status of being imitations of adult labels, unlike child labels which are displays of lexical knowledge, are very often not receipted by the adult. That is to say, these sequences conform less tightly to the three-part structure of *elicitation - label - receipt*, which has been identified for lexical display sequences. In (109) above, adult receipting turns are notably absent:

- (109) (TT)
- |   |         |                                                                                                                    |
|---|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | adult : | <u>w:a:tch</u>                                                                                                     |
| 2 |         | (0.6)                                                                                                              |
| 3 | child : | [ <u>v</u> <sub>τ</sub> <u>p</u> <sub>τ</sub> <u>ə</u> <sub>τ</sub> <u>ʌ</u> <sub>τ</sub> <u>tʃ</u> <sub>τ</sub> ] |
| 4 | →       | (1.2)                                                                                                              |
| 5 | adult : | [ʔ] an' a <u>x:-r:a:y</u>                                                                                          |
| 6 |         | (1.1)                                                                                                              |
| 7 | child : | [j <sup>ɪ</sup> <u>ä</u> <sub>τ</sub> : <u>ʔ</u> <sub>τ</sub> ]                                                    |
| 8 | →       | (.)                                                                                                                |
| 9 | adult : | and a <u>ya:cht</u> :                                                                                              |

|    |         |         |
|----|---------|---------|
| 10 |         | (0.7)   |
| 11 | child : | [hẽ:ẽʔ] |
| 12 | →       | (0.8)   |
| 13 | adult : | and a   |
| 14 |         | (0.7)   |

Imitation sequences, then, are rather different from lexical display sequences, in that they have a less rigid structure. They not only place fewer demands on the child, they also seem to constrain the adult less in terms of a requirement to receipt the child's utterances. The point to be made from this in relation to the concerns of this section - the non-pursuit of phonetic refinement - is that in these particular sequences non-pursuit is the norm, without necessarily being marked by an explicit affirmation on the part of the adult.

The following subsection will focus on those sequences in which the child's labelling turn is a display of lexical knowledge, and on the resources available to the adult in such sequences for signalling the acceptability of the child's label in phonetic terms.

### 5.4.iii Lexical Display Sequences

In Chapter Four it was demonstrated that child labels in such sequences are overwhelmingly met with adult receipts. The design of these receipts differentiated them into three sets, according to whether or not they incorporated a version of the child's label, and to whether or not they incorporated a confirmation marker like *yes* or *clever girl*. It was seen that adult receipts which fell into the first two sets and incorporated a confirmation marker were oriented to by both participants as sequence-final, and effectively closed down talk about any particular label. An example was (86):



(86) (CC)

adult :      ta:ble yea 'n' ((points)) what's  
                 that  
                 (0.8)

child :      [t<sub>4</sub>ẽ] ((throwing hands down to  
                 sides))

→ adult :      chai:r ye:s ((turning page))  
                 (0.7)

adult :      ooh what's that

The confirmation marker in the adult's receipting turn in such a sequence not only confirms the child's choice of label: it also displays that, for now, at this moment, to have produced that appropriate label is enough. Phonetic issues are not taken up following such a receipt, even when the child's version is articulatorily wayward. This, once again, illustrates the way in which lexical work is primary over phonetic work in picture book labelling talk. Lexical work hinges, for the most part, on some absolute standard of lexical appropriacy and inappropriacy, available to the adult, and regularly brought into play. Phonetic work, on the other hand, relies on no such absolute standard of acceptability/unacceptability; is optional; and may be shaped by local and immediate concerns.<sup>66</sup>

## Affirmatory repeats

One way, then, for the adult to opt out of pursuing phonetic work on a child's label is to receipt it with a confirmation marker. By contrast, it was seen in Chapter Four that the third set of receipts, those which repeated the child's label without an accompanying confirmation marker, had different consequences. As has been explored in some detail in the previous section, an adult repeat of this kind can sometimes project a repair attempt from the child, and can sometimes suppress this kind of work. Some examples of both kinds of sequence were presented in that

<sup>66</sup>This issue will be taken up and discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

section, although the focus of attention was on reparative repeats. Further examples of affirmatory repeats are presented here for more careful scrutiny:

(110)<sup>67</sup> (TA)

adult : o{ oh } who's that

child : { [ɛh] }

(1.0)

child : [nʲa:ɪn]

→ adult : [l:p::ɪə n]  
breathy

(5.0)

child : °norah°

(111) (TA)

adult : the rain stopped an' no:rah (.)

sighted la:n:d

(0.5)

child : dere's { no } rah

adult : { ( ) }

→ adult : there's nora:h

(1.6)

adult : o::::h (.) a:ll the animals were

glad to leave the a:rk

(112)<sup>68</sup> (SO)

adult : 't 're tho:s:e

(1.9)

child : [nʲkʲgə.ʰ ɪ t̪ ɪ]

<sup>67</sup>This is extract (84) with more phonetic detail.

<sup>68</sup>This is an extension of extract (78) with more phonetic detail.

(0.5)

child :  $\overline{[g^{\partial} \cdot e \cdot I^2 t^j] \{s^j\}}$

→ adult :  $\{ \overline{[g^{\partial} \cdot \underline{a} \cdot \underline{e} \cdot I p^h]} \}$

(2.0)

child : ·h hhh hhh

(0.6)

child : ·h or'ng:e

(113) (SO)

child :  $\overline{[t^h \partial \quad t_{\partial}^{jh} \underline{e} I \quad t_{\partial}^h \partial :^w]}$

adult :  $\overline{[t_{\partial}^h \ddot{e}^I t_{\partial}^h \theta^w]}$

(1.3)

child :  $[h:\downarrow \quad h\downarrow \partial \tilde{e}^h \quad h\downarrow \partial \tilde{e}^h \quad h\downarrow \partial \tilde{e}^h]$

(114)<sup>69</sup> (TA)

adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t

(0.5)

child :  $[^h p^{\partial} \partial q]$

(.)

adult : what

(.)

child :  $\overline{[p_{\partial}^{\partial} \partial^{\partial} \partial^w]}$

→ adult :  $[\underline{a} w_{\partial}^{\partial} \partial]$

(0.5)

<sup>69</sup>This is an extension of extract (65) with more phonetic detail.



|         |                             |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| adult : | ·hhh {hhh                   |
|         | {                           |
| child : | {h <u>e</u> d:geho <u>o</u> |

In order to uncover the characteristics of these adult repeat turns which are serving to affirm a child's utterance rather than to correct it, they can be compared with those examined in the previous section which were seen to do corrective work. There, two features in particular were found to be associated with corrective adult repeats - namely that they were delayed in the turn space following a child's label, and that they displayed contrastivity with the child's turn by means (most saliently at least) of their pitch contour. Consideration of the extracts presented above reveals that these repeats are different on both counts.


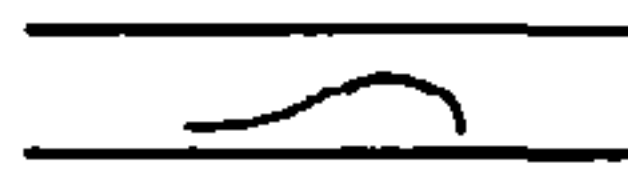

Firstly, all of the adult repeat turns in extracts (110-114) above occur without delay, immediately following the child's production of the label (and in (112), the adult's turn is even slightly incursive into the child's (second) labelling attempt). While phonetic work has been seen to be projected by a delayed adult repeat, adult repeats in the corpus which come off as affirmations and suppress phonetic work are never delayed.

And secondly, an examination of the pitch contours of the child and adult labels in (110)-(114) shows a marked LACK of contrastivity operating between the two turns in each sequence. In each case, the pitch contour of the adult's repeat shadows very closely that of the child's turn which went before it. In all cases that contour is some kind of rise-fall, but the sequences display different shapes of rise-fall pitch, and it would seem much more likely that it is the relativity of the two pitches in each sequence, rather than some value of a rise-fall pitch *per se*, which is important here.

## Minimising contrastivity

This issue of contrastivity, the way in which it is effected, and its association with correction, raises interesting questions for the analysis of this kind of data. One problem for the analyst working with talk from children of this young age lies in drawing the boundaries around what 'counts' as correction, when a child's speech is so unadultlike that child and adult versions of 'the same thing' necessarily differ (sometimes quite dramatically) in their phonetic shape. An adult 'repeat' of a child utterance is likely to be an object which is formally distinct from it in several ways. And this is not only a problem for the analyst. To do any kind of repeat in talk runs the risk of being heard to be doing a correction, if any differences are hearable between one's own version and its prior. A potential problem for the adult interactant here, then, lies in managing to produce a repeat of some part of the child's talk without it coming off as a correction.

Looking again at sequences (110)-(114), it can be seen that while a striking feature of the adult repeat turns in each case is their echoic pitch contour, pitch is not the only prosodic feature in which similarities are observable between the child and adult turns. Take (110) for example:

|       |         |                                                                                      |
|-------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (110) | (TA)    |                                                                                      |
|       | adult : | o{ oh } who's that                                                                   |
|       |         | { }                                                                                  |
|       | child : | { [ĕh] }                                                                             |
|       |         | (1.0)                                                                                |
|       |         |  |
| →     | child : | [n <sub>1</sub> ä:ĩĩ n]                                                              |
|       |         |  |
| →     | adult : | [ :p::ĩə n]                                                                          |
|       |         |  |
|       |         | (5.0)                                                                                |
|       | child : | °norah°                                                                              |

Here, not only is the low-mid-low rise-fall pitch contour of the child's turn matched in the adult's, but the adult version also has a markedly long open vocalic portion which matches it in rhythm to the child's turn.

In (112), similarly, there is some rhythmic matching between the child and adult turns, as well as a narrow high rise and fall to low pitch contour in common to both:

(112) (SO)

adult : 't 're tho:s:e

(1.9)

child : [n²k'ge.ʰ ɹɛ ɸ.]

(0.5)

→ child :  $[g^{\partial} \cdot e \cdot i^{\partial} t_{\partial}^j, \{s^j\}]$

( )

→ adult :  $\{ [g^a \cdot 1 \cdot \underline{g} \cdot 1 p^h] \}$

(2.0)

child :       ·h hhh hhh

(0.6)

child :        ·h    gr'ng:e

Articulatory features, in addition to prosodic ones, may also be matched, as is the case in (113):

(113) (SO)

→ child : [ t<sup>h</sup><sub>1</sub> a t<sup>h</sup><sub>2</sub> e I t<sup>h</sup><sub>3</sub> ɔ : w ]

→ adult :  $[t^h \ddot{e}^I t^h \theta^w]$

(1.3)



child : [h:↓ h↓ɪ̃ɛ̃<sup>h</sup> h↓ɪ̃ɛ̃<sup>h</sup> h↓ɪ̃ɛ̃<sup>h</sup>]

Both child and adult versions are marked by two instances of alveolar plosion which is tense, quite heavily aspirated, and laminally articulated. There is marked lip-rounding at the end of both versions. In addition the rhythm of the two turns is closely matched, and a tense voice quality in the utterance of the adult mimics that of the child.

And in (114), the disyllabic structure of the child's version of *owl* - with a labial glide and following vocalic portion with rounded and central quality - is retained in the adult's repeat:

- (114) (TA)
- adult : right 'n' what's tha:t  
(0.5)
- child : [ʰp̣<sup>u</sup>ɹ̥]  
(.)
- adult : what  
(.)
- child : [ɹ̥ạ<sup>u</sup>ω̣ə̣]
- adult : [ạω̣ə̣:t]  
(0.5)
- adult : ·hhh {hhh  
                          {  
child :                   {hed:gehog

Contrastivity in these examples is being neutralised not only through the (perhaps most salient) feature of pitch contour, but through a complex of phonetic features (both articulatory and prosodic) by which the adult's utterance is brought into line with that of the child. What these examples suggest is that one way of doing a repeat

in talk without it coming off as a correction, is to minimise all phonetic differences between one's own version and its prior.

## 5.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has continued the detailed investigation into the didactic nature of labelling talk which began in the last chapter. Here, the focus of interest has been on phonetic, rather than lexical, aspects of the child's talk, and the ways in which they are worked on during labelling. It has been seen that, while picture labelling sequences are primarily designed as displays of the child's lexical knowledge, they nonetheless present opportunities for work also to be enacted on the child's articulatory skills.

A large part of this chapter has been concerned with pursuing a particular line of investigation suggested by a consideration of the issues involved in this area. This investigation has centred on an attempt to differentiate between adult repeat turns in one particular sequential position - following a child's attempt at a label. It has been found that these repeats can be distinguished in terms of their interactional accomplishments, and in terms of their prosodic design. This investigation has provided illustration, then, to support the misgivings expressed in Chapter One concerning the superficial treatment of a class of objects like 'repeats' in the child language literature. Even single word repeats occurring in the same position in sequence can be seen to be quite diverse objects. Fine details in the prosodic construction of these turns can be associated with significant diversity in the consequences they hold for the trajectory of the talk which follows them.

Two features in particular have been found, through this investigation, to be associated with adult repeats which are reparative in orientation. Some reparative repeats are marked by a pitch contour which, like that associated with the self-

corrections identified by Local (1992b), is high and falls to low. Whether this kind of a pitch pattern is more generally associated with corrective work in talk, or whether it here does that work by virtue of contrasting with the pitch contour of the child's turns and thereby underlining the work of contrastivity which is inherent in the activity of correction, is a question which would merit further research.

A second class of adult repeats which accomplish similar reparative work in respect of their priors have been seen to be designed rather differently. Here, a temporal delay in the placement of these turns appears to disguise their corrective character by bringing them off as re-elicitations. Three particular points are raised by this finding. First, some parallels can be drawn with other work which has been done on correction. Jefferson (1987) has described certain ways in which correction can be 'embedded' in conversation, and accomplished in particularly discreet ways without ever being brought to the surface of what speakers are dealing with in their talk.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, as discussed in subsection 5.3.v, Local (1992b: 295) has uncovered a kind of "prosodic disguise" which characterises certain self-corrections in speakers' turns, and Couper-Kuhlen (1989: 23) has identified a rhythmic kind of "prosodic camouflage" by which speakers can soften certain reparative actions. What is suggested by all of these findings is that, while repair in talk is often oriented to as an activity which is challenging or threatening in some way, speakers nonetheless have at their disposal various delicate resources by which they may disguise or euphemise their corrective actions.

A second point raised by the finding that phonetic repair initiations in labelling talk can be disguised as re-elicitations concerns the relationship between lexical and phonetic issues in picture book labelling. It was seen in Chapter Four that initiations of repair on the child's choice of label are typically direct and explicit. The fact that phonetic repair initiations can, by contrast, be particularly subtle, underlines the

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<sup>70</sup>Some examples of embedded correction will be considered in Chapter Six.



primacy of lexical issues in the 'working on talk' which is offered by picture book labelling. Working on the child's articulations is not directly what this talk sets out to do.

Finally, an important methodological point is raised by a comparison of this class of delayed corrective/re-elicitive repeats with those which similarly match the prosodic characteristics of their priors but are produced without delay and come off as affirmations. Much has been gained in conversation analytic work from a consideration of the precise timing of speakers' turns relative to one another (e.g. Jefferson 1973; Jefferson and Schegloff 1975), particularly in the area of overlap and incursion. It would seem to lend even more weight to the importance of a fine-grained sequential analysis to consider a phenomenon whereby the members of a class of formally (including prosodically) identical objects, occupying the same POSITION in sequence, can be interactionally quite different objects by virtue of their TEMPORAL PLACEMENT within that position.

In recognition of the fact that, for the child, the signal NOT to repair an articulation is as important as the signal to have another go, the later part of the chapter has considered the means by which labelling sequences are terminated. Since repeats in this kind of talk are so heavily implicated in the work of correction, there is a very real problem here for the adult who chooses not to pursue phonetic refinement from the child. By the nature of young children's speech, an adult repeat of a child's label is likely to express a certain amount of contrastivity with it in articulatory terms. However, it would seem that, in order not to be heard to be a correction, a repeat may minimise contrastivity along other parameters - may become, in other words, a kind of imitation of the child's turn. It may be that one account for the observation that adults are often heard to 'mimic' young children's utterances is that they are repeating them in an expressly non-corrective format.

The preceding three chapters have investigated in some detail the design of picture labelling sequences, and have uncovered some of the ways in which linguistic aspects of the child's talk are 'worked on' in this setting. It has been seen that in labelling interactions, there are systematic means by which an adult can initiate repair on both lexical and phonetic aspects of the child's utterances, and also systematic means for NOT repairing those aspects. Work on lexical matters can be seen to be built in to the design of labelling talk, while work on phonetic matters occupies a less central position. Nonetheless, both areas provide detailed illustration of some features associated with 'doing instructing' of a linguistic kind. An interesting line of enquiry which is opened up by these findings is to discover to what extent the adult has the same resources and utilises the same devices - in short to what extent such instructional mechanisms are in place - outside the specific setting of picture book labelling, in 'ordinary' child-adult interaction. This is the concern of the following chapter, which will first of all assess the findings of the previous three chapters, to arrive at a more succinct picture of how 'working on talk' is accomplished in picture book labelling. These findings will then be held up against some child-adult 'mundane conversational' data, in order to assess the extent to which the young child's routine linguistic environment may be considered to be linguistically didactic in the same terms.



## CHAPTER SIX

### WORKING ON TALK: A COMPARISON OF PICTURE BOOK LABELLING AND 'MUNDANE CONVERSATION'

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapters Three, Four and Five, a body of data has been presented to illustrate a number of features of the kinds of interactional sequences which routinely occur when young children and adults look together at picture books. This particular contextual setting was chosen as one which would provide instances of talk which is concerned with 'instructional' issues, and what is more, with instructional issues of a linguistic kind. The preceding two chapters have been explicitly concerned with identifying some of the constituent features of this instructional style of talk. The concern of the present chapter is to look beyond the picture book labelling setting, at instances of 'mundane' conversation, in order to consider the extent to which similarly didactic features are identifiable in the ordinary conversations in which adults and young children routinely engage.

In this chapter, the findings of the previous three chapters will first of all be briefly summarised, in order to arrive at a clearer picture of some of the features which constitute 'pedagogic' interaction. This will involve a consideration of four issues in particular: - the routinised structure of labelling sequences; the recurrence of an adult receipt following a child's labels; the devices used for the management of lexical correction; and the relationship between lexical and phonetic work in this setting. These findings will then be assessed, so that they may provide a basis for a consideration of the extent to which didacticism is a feature of the data from mundane conversation. Section 6.4 will consist of a presentation of a number of extracts from the conversational data, directed towards an initial comparative examination of these issues in mundane talk. The analysis presented in this section will demonstrate, firstly,



that labelling is an activity constructed widely in child-adult talk, which is not restricted to the use of picture books. It will also be seen that, while adults engage in pervasive affirmation of a child's linguistic productions, linguistic correction is regularly performed in a much less direct format than is the case in picture book labelling talk.

## 6.2 CONSTITUENT FEATURES OF 'WORKING ON TALK' IN PICTURE BOOK LABELLING

### 6.2.i The Labelling Activity As A Routine

The analysis presented in the preceding three chapters has shown, to begin with, the extent to which labelling from picture books is a routinised activity, consisting of a highly recurrent series of sequences conforming to a regular three-part format, *elicitation - label - receipt*. One consequence of this regularity is that labelling is marked out as an identifiable, bounded activity, both for its participants, and also for the analyst investigating its design. In most cases in the corpus, bouts of labelling from picture books are initiated by the adult with an explicit offer to engage in the activity, such as *let's look in your book* and *let's have a look at your little book eh*. After such an opening, a *what's that?* question can be presumed to be hearable as a particular kind of action, and as implicating a particular kind of response (a label) from the child. It is hearable, in other words, as a move in the labelling game. In Chapter Three it was noted that the use of *and* with these eliciting questions from the adult contributes to their construction as members of a recurrent series. In that chapter it was also noted that these eliciting questions can be attenuated to a form such as *and this*. The unproblematic employment of such an elicitation device lends weight to the observation that these sequences constitute an identifiable activity type which is familiar to its participants.

While the data makes manifest, then, the habitual and recurrent nature of the labelling activity, there are also indications that some of the finer details of the rules for engaging

in this routine or game may, on occasion, be taught to the child during its progress.

For example, the following two extracts were analysed in Chapter Three:

(115)<sup>71</sup>(CC)

adult : ·hh ((moves point)) 'n' what's  
'is one he:re  
 child : ((signs telephone )) [<sup>\*</sup>R::<sup>o</sup>R:]  
 ((looks at adult))  
 (.)  
 adult : tele pho:ne ((looking at child))  
 child : [<sup>a</sup>R:::<sup>h</sup>] ((not signing,  
 looking away, moving  
 about in chair))  
 → adult : say tele{pho:ne}  
 child : { [<sup>v</sup>R: ]::<sup>o</sup>R }  
 → adult : say tele{phone for m} e  
 child : { [<sup>v</sup>R:::<sup>a</sup>R ] }  
 child : [h↓ hɐ·Ijɛ:] ((signing telephone ))  
 (.)  
 adult : (hh)a(h)ye-(hehe) ((turning page))  
 adult : ·h 'n' what's tha:t ((points))

(56) (TA)

child : what's this  
 → adult : er::m: (.) yɔ{u t}ell mɛ: what =  
 child : {°( )°}  
 adult : = is it  
 (1.0)  
 child : z:e:bra  
 adult : zebra:: ye:s

In each extract, the adult's actions spell out to the child a particular requirement of a labelling move. In (115) the requirement is that a label be vocalised rather than signed; in (56) it is that a label be provided by the child rather than solicited from the adult.

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<sup>71</sup>This is extract (49), represented without transcription of pitch.

Any kind of spoken interaction in which the child participates requires the child to learn the rules for engaging in it, and picture book labelling is, of course, no exception. This talk is instructional, then, in the micro level sense of being at times concerned with the teaching of its own conventions.

But while the basic structure of these sequences has been seen to be remarkably regular in its pattern, the labelling activity nonetheless displays a considerable degree of FLEXIBILITY within that structure, with regard to the demands which it places on the child. It was seen in Chapter Three that there are different formats available to the adult for eliciting a child's labels, and that these different formats place differential demands on the child's labelling resources. The adult is therefore in a position to tailor the task presented to the child at any given point in the progress of the activity, in the light of knowledge or expectations concerning the child's linguistic abilities. The fact that the corpus presents very few instances of repair being enacted on the child's choice of label suggests that the adult is indeed recurrently utilising these options, in order to maximise child 'success'.

### **6.2.ii The Adult's Receipting Turn In Third Position In A Labelling Sequence**

The recurrent three turn structure of labelling sequences provides an important key to an understanding of their constitution as components of a pedagogic mode of talk. Of central importance to the work of instructing which is accomplished through this talk, is the third position turn in that structure - the regularly-occurring adult evaluative receipt which follows a child's labelling turns.

As has already been noted, this kind of turn within a three-part sequence has often been identified in the literature as characteristic of classroom and other styles of pedagogic interaction. This is because one accomplishment of an evaluative receipt in third turn position after a question, is to specify that question as having held a particular status.





answer, and therefore as NOT having been in possession of this knowledge when the question was asked.

By contrast, a third position receipt which EVALUATES an answer to a question, proposes instead that the questioner has undergone no such change of state of knowledge, but has been already in possession of the information elicited by the question. An evaluative receipt, then, types a question as having been of the 'exam' type - a question produced in order to test its recipient's knowledge.<sup>73</sup>

The recurrence of this kind of questioning sequence in classically pedagogic settings such as in the interaction between teacher and pupils in classroom lessons has often been noted. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), in their presentation of a model for the classification of units of discourse found in classroom interactions, describe a typical classroom "exchange" as consisting of three "moves":- *opening*, *answering* and *follow-up*. In Sinclair and Coulthard's model, these moves are seen as constituted by a variety of "acts". In a teaching exchange, they find the *opening* move to be regularly realised with an *elicitation* act, the *answering* move with a *reply* act, and the *follow-up* move with an act they term *evaluate*. In other words, they find that classroom teaching is regularly built up of a string of 'exam' question sequences.

Other researchers have made similar observations concerning the recurrence of this kind of three-part structure in classroom settings, but have used a variety of labels for its constituent parts. McHoul (1978:191), for instance, describes an "utterance-triad" of *question-answer-comment on the sufficiency of that answer*, and remarks that the absence of the third position comment can "mark a failure to have produced something recognisable as an answer" (1978:190 footnote). Mehan (1979) sees the three parts of these sequences, which he labels *initiation-reply-evaluation*, as comprising two coupled

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<sup>73</sup>Heritage also notes that further types of questions, such as those characteristic of interviews, cross-examination, and other kinds of talk produced for 'overhearing' by a third party, may be in part constituted as such by an ABSENCE of third position receipt.



adjacency pairs, with a sequence of *initiation* and *reply* constituting a first pair part, upon the completion of which a second pair part, *evaluation*, is made conditionally relevant.

However, frequently as this three-part structure has been described, and consistently as it has been associated with instructional modes of interaction, few researchers, it seems, have been concerned with an explication of just how this kind of sequence accomplishes instructional work. The Sinclair and Coulthard model offers little in the way of a serious analysis of the interactional accomplishments of its "units of discourse", such as might be gained by an appeal to the participants' own behaviours in order to supply a warrant for an interactionally-motivated categorisation of those units. Their model aims at exhaustive classification of the components of discourse - not at explication of the interactional accomplishments (and detailed linguistic exponency) of those components. McHoul and Mehan, while each taking an approach to their data which is more concerned with the interactional achievements of turns at talk than is the Sinclair and Coulthard model, nonetheless do little in the way of assessing the implications of the recurrence of this three-part structure in the realisation of pedagogy as an interactional activity. Just how this kind of sequence accomplishes 'doing instruction' does not appear to have been systematically examined. It is pertinent here, therefore, to give some thought to this issue.

A third position evaluative receipt after a question characterises the questioner not only as being already in possession of the information being solicited, but also, by virtue of having access to that information, as being in a position to measure the correctness of the elicited answer. The answer itself, framed in this way, also becomes a particular kind of object. It is not an INFORMING, as many answers to questions are, but a DISPLAY. The child's turn in a picture book labelling sequence, since it implicates an evaluative response from the adult, takes on the status of a performance, a presentation of certain skills, offered to the adult for acceptance or rejection - offered, that is, TO BE



WORKED ON. 'Exam' question sequences, of course, may be concerned with the testing of any number of areas of knowledge. It is a feature of the labelling activity, however, that the knowledge which is being tested is linguistic. A child's labelling turns, that is, present a display of certain of the child's linguistic abilities, and explicitly offer them to the adult to be worked on on those terms.

In Chapter Four, it was seen that there are essentially two kinds of work which the adult's evaluative receipt may perform. It may explicitly accept and affirm the child's prior action, or it may indicate non-acceptance and instigate repair on it. The recurrent selection, by the adult, of one of these two options, has permitted the analysis so far to consider the two complementary issues of 'repair' and 'non-repair', on both lexical and phonetic matters arising from the child's labelling display. By means of the adult's third position evaluative receipt, one or other of these two courses of action is routinely taken. Aside from allowing analysis to be legitimately structured in this way, there are at least two important consequences of this.

One is that the analysis of repair in this talk involves rather different considerations from an analysis of repair in mundane conversational exchanges between adults. Schegloff et al. (1977:381) have described the organisation of repair as "the self-righting mechanism for the organisation of language use in social interaction", and have noted (1977:363) that in talk "it appears that nothing is, in principle, excludable from the class 'repairable'". Repair, in talk, can happen anywhere, on anything. It therefore regularly involves a kind of 'time out', or hold-up in the flow of the talk's apparent business. It would seem that all forms of talk carry this self-righting mechanism as part of their regular machinery, and of course labelling talk is no exception. Adult and child may take 'time out' from the business of labelling to attend to problems of, for instance, the transmission or interpretation of their utterances. However, the structure of 'exam' question sequences also provides for repair in a rather different way. Since a third position receipt in such a sequence is regularly evaluative of its prior,

opportunities for repair are built into the core design of these sequences, such that repair is either enacted or explicitly NOT enacted on specified parameters of the answering turn. In picture book labelling, those parameters are determined as the lexical appropriacy of the child's contribution. Repair, then, does not only take the form of an optional insertion into the stream of interaction: it also occupies a central position in the talk's structure.

The second consequence of the pervasiveness of the evaluative receipt which either affirms or rejects a child's label, is that the child is given reduced opportunities for a critical monitoring of her or his own turns, since responsibility for such monitoring is, by virtue of that third position turn, conferred upon the adult. Self-initiation of repair on the part of the child was seen to be rare in the labelling corpus. And indeed the format of labelling sequences, whereby the adult's evaluation regularly follows hard on the heels of a child's labelling attempt, minimises the actual opportunities for such initiation, just as the expectation of its occurrence may inhibit the critical monitoring which would motivate it. The charge of monitoring the child's utterances for their linguistic 'correctness' is taken away from the child and laid at the door of the adult - a feature which would seem to be crucial to this talk's pedagogic nature.

### **6.2.iii Lexical Repair Work In Labelling**

In Chapter Four, consideration was given to the suggestion, presented by Schegloff et al. (1977:380-81), that the preference for self-correction, identified as widely prevalent in other kinds of talk-in-interaction, might be weakened in the interaction between adults and children. This issue was explored, as one which might shed light on the constitution of didacticism in talk. However, the picture book corpus was seen to supply no evidence for such a weakening. As in other kinds of talk, other-correction, on the part of the adult, is often withheld, and self-correction from the child invited. Other-correction, when it does occur, appears to be motivated by a particular circumstance - such as the child's having repeatedly made an error - which may give the



adult warrant to treat the error as arising from a genuine inability on the child's part to supply the appropriate label.

Instead, it was suggested that the preference for self-initiation of repair, also reported to be prevalent in mundane interactional settings between adults, may not operate in quite the same way in this kind of talk. This atypical organisation surrounding the opportunities which are presented for a child to initiate repair attempts on her or his own lexical errors, is in large part a corollary of the pervasiveness of the adult's evaluative receipt in third turn position, discussed in the previous section. It was suggested that a distinctive preference organisation surrounding repair-initiation, rather than surrounding correction itself, may be a characteristic feature of didactic styles of interaction.

A further observation made in Chapter Four relates to the design of the adult's repair-initiations. It was seen that the adult's turns which initiate repair on the child's lexical errors, whether they supply or invite correction, employ a restricted set of turn-type options available in talk for doing this kind of interactional work. Specifically, they avoid turn-types which would require the child to conduct careful monitoring of the problematic utterance to locate and identify an error, in favour of turns which explicitly mark, in their syntactic construction and their prosodic design, the work of contrastivity which is inherent to the activity of correction. Lexical repair, then, is not only regularly initiated by the adult: it is initiated in particularly self-explicit ways. Both factors lessen the responsibility left with the child for engaging in a critical monitoring of the talk produced.

#### **6.2.iv The Relationship Between Lexical And Phonetic Repair Work**

Consideration of the findings presented in Chapter Five on the work enacted on phonetic aspects of the child's labelling utterances, points up the relationship between work on lexical matters and work on phonetic matters in this talk. It will be useful to



elaborate on that relationship here. The two areas have been looked at separately (and have merited separate chapters), not simply out of an appeal to the taxonomic 'tidiness' of linguistic 'levels' of description. Rather, the distinction is motivated by the differential status which the two kinds of work can be seen to be awarded by the design of labelling talk.

A number of findings from the previous three chapters can be pointed to, which suggest that in picture book interaction lexical considerations pertaining to the child's utterances take precedence over phonetic considerations. Most sequences elicit a labelling move (i.e. one that requires a display of lexical skills) from the child. In those (much less frequent) sequences where the child's finding the right word is NOT the interactional business (i.e. where the adult first supplies the label, and simply invites imitation), there is less adherence to the same three-part structure. That is to say that a child's labels which have the status of imitations rather than of lexical displays are often not receipted (accepted or rejected) by the adult. In addition, an 'acceptable' child performance in the imitation 'task', unlike a performance in the labelling task, is generally not pursued over several turns.

A child's labels are always dealt with on a lexical level before receiving attention of a phonetic kind. That is to say, only lexically appropriate labels are phonetically repaired. Inappropriate labels and child responses which do not supply a label are not subjected to reparative work on a phonetic level. An example is supplied by the following, taken from extract (48):

(116) (TT)

adult :

is that daddy's °wa:tch°(h)

(1.1)

adult :

°say wa:tch°

(0.6)

|   |         |                                                                           |
|---|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| → | child : | $\overline{\overline{[t^{\text{h}}\text{æ} \cdot d\text{e} : \text{ɜ}]}}$ |
| → | adult : | $\overline{\text{what}}$                                                  |
|   |         | (.)                                                                       |
|   | adult : | $\overline{\overline{\text{wa} : \text{tch}}}$                            |
|   |         | (0.4)                                                                     |
| → | child : | $\overline{\overline{[n\text{æ} d \cdot \text{ɜ} : \text{ɜ}]}}$           |
| → | adult : | $\overline{\overline{\text{say } \text{wa} : \text{tch}}}$                |

After an initial (somewhat uncharacteristic) elicitation on the part of the adult (*is that daddy's watch?*), and a follow up prompt (*say watch*), the child produces a reproduction of part of the adult's original elicitation, but not the part which is displayed by her prompt (*say watch*) to have been the target label. Instead he produces a version of *daddy's*. As was discussed in Chapter Three, the prosodic shape of the adult's *what* which follows this turn does not enact repair work on that utterance as a version of *daddy's*: instead, by following the stepped level high pitch of the child's turn with a low fall, it builds the child's utterance as incomplete, and pursues completion by (as is evidenced by the adult's following turn) an utterance of *watch*. In other words, the adult's *what* here comes off with the force of *daddy's what*.

At the end of this extract, the child produces another version of *daddy's*. Again this is not explicitly evaluated on its own merits, but is met with an instruction to produce the target label, *say watch*. Both child versions of *daddy's*,  $[t^{\text{h}}\text{æ} \cdot d\text{e} : \text{ɜ}]$  and  $[n\text{æ} d \cdot \text{ɜ} : \text{ɜ}]$ , carry atypical phonetic features which would make them candidates for phonetic repair. However, they are not candidates for phonetic repair here, because they are not appropriate labels. In labelling sequences, then, phonetic repair work is supplementary and subsequent to work on lexical issues.



It can also be noted that phonetic work on a child's labels is optional and for any labelling attempt may not be addressed at all. Extremely idiosyncratic articulations may pass without any pursuit of improvement, and simply receive confirmation as appropriate labels. To some extent, this points to a very general linguistic observation concerning the different positions held in linguistic structure by lexis on the one hand, and phonology and grammar on the other. While both phonology and grammar can properly be seen as complex SYSTEMIC (indeed, polysystemic) phenomena whose components are variable across and within speakers and subject to evolution throughout the course of the child's development, the lexicon, as a symbolic set, is more restricted in its variability. It could be argued that while a child's pronunciations (and to some extent a child's grammatical structures) may be regarded as manifestations of the child's presently current idiosyncratic system, the business of matching lexical forms to referents in the world is an issue where there are, by and large, right and wrong answers.

However, these fundamental, qualitative differences between areas in linguistic structure do not of themselves provide a full account for the differential treatment of lexical and phonetic repair work in this data. One could envisage an interactional setting where the hitting of some closely specified phonetic target, by one party, were the explicit concern of the talk. Some kinds of speech therapy interactions would provide instances of this. Similarly, some kinds of language classroom interactions would provide instances of talk in which one party's production of irreproachable standard grammatical formulations were the underlying business of the talk. And it is also the case that the lexicon is flexible enough to admit of synonymy, hyponymy, and the coexistence of stylistically marked equivalents, some of which may indeed be age-marked in children. Consider the following sequence, taken from a bout of labelling which, while centred on a jigsaw puzzle rather than a picture book, nonetheless appears



to correspond in its format with the picture book labelling sequences which have so far been examined:

(117) (SF)

adult :      ho:rsie (.) and m m wha:t are  
                 those down there

(1.1)

child :      [də.<sup>ə</sup>kɪ.]  
                 < ><sup>+</sup> (.)

adult :      well they a:re bi:rds yes but  
                 they're called ducks aren't they

(2.5)

adult :      °yea° h

This sequence occurs within a string of labellings prompted by a picture portrayed by a jigsaw puzzle<sup>74</sup>. Following her eliciting question, *and m m what are those down there*, the adult appears to hear the child's labelling turn as presenting some version of *birds*. This much is evidenced by her response to that labelling turn, *well they are birds yes but they're called ducks aren't they*. This would appear to be a mishearing, since the child's [də.<sup>ə</sup>kɪ.] has alveolar plosion at its beginning, and velar plosion without voicing between the two vocalic portions, and sounds very much like a version of *duckie*. The adult's apparent mishearing is perhaps accounted for by the rather long central vocalic portion in the first part of the utterance, which carries a burst of loudness; and by the absence of audible aspiration accompanying the velar plosion, giving the impression of voicing throughout the utterance. The longish close, front vocalic portion at the end of the utterance would suggest that what the adult actually hears the child to have said is not *birds*, or *bird*, but *birdie*.

While the merits of this labelling attempt are acknowledged (*they are birds yes*), *birdie* is also treated as NOT being the target label. This is suggested by the *well* preface to the

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<sup>74</sup>In Section 6.4.i. I shall examine the development of labelling sequences such as this in a variety of situational settings, and demonstrate that they are no different in structure to those prompted by picture books.

adult's turn, and by high rising pitch giving prominence to *are* in *they are birds yes*; and it is made explicit by a corrective statement, *but they're called ducks* in the same turn. The tag question *aren't they* at the end of the turn treats *ducks* as a familiar label to the child, and therefore vindicates the solicitation of its production as a not unreasonable demand. It also keeps alive that solicitation. The 2.5 second pause following this adult turn is at least compatible with the suggestion that the turn is designed to invite an articulation of *ducks* from the child, in the same way as other corrective adult turns in the corpus have been seen to invite, and usually to effect, a child rendition of the correction. No such rendition is forthcoming from the child here, however, which may very well be because he has, in fact, already articulated *duckie* - a lexically appropriate label.

The point to be made from this extract here, in the context of a consideration of the place of lexis in linguistic structure and in labelling, is that the adult COULD (legitimately, as far as the semantics of English is concerned, due to the hyponymous relationship between *duck* and *bird*) have responded to the child's turn with *birds yes* or *birdies yes* or *birdie yes* - could, that is, have treated her hearing of the child's label as an acceptable description of the referent in the picture. The fact that *birdie* is a wrong label is a constraint of the activity of labelling, not of the English language or of the place or nature of lexis within it. Lexical concerns, then, are built into the structure of labelling interaction in a highly specified way - a characteristic not shared by phonetic concerns.

Further differences between lexical and phonetic matters in labelling talk are highlighted by a consideration of the means by which the initiation of repair on a child's pronunciations is managed. One means for inviting phonetic correction from the child, discussed in Chapter Five, is the adult's use of a delayed production of the target label, produced without a prosodic shape which would mark contrastivity, and having the characteristics of a re-elicitation. It was suggested that repair in these cases is being



'prosodically camouflaged', in contrast to the direct and self-explicit means by which lexical repair is carried out.

It can also be noted that contrastivity is not syntactically marked in adult turns which initiate repair on a child's pronunciations, in the way that it is when the child has produced a wrong label. Unlike lexical repair initiations, phonetic repair strategies by the adult do not involve the use of *no*. Nor are statements of the form *not x but y* found, where a child's pronunciation is explicitly rejected. It may be argued, as above, that the absence of an absolute standard for 'correctness' and 'incorrectness' in articulatory matters means there is no warrant for this kind of rejection. It may also be argued that the latter strategy, which involves a repetition of the child's problematic articulation, is not employed because in many cases the child's form is not reproducible. However, in a sequence of mealtime interaction which will be explored in more detail in section 6.4.iii, just such a turn-type is used. While the adult is orienting to the yolk of an egg which the child is eating the child produces, in the space of several turns, the articulations [ $\lambda j_{\frac{1}{2}} u^v k$ ] and [ $l^j_{\frac{1}{2}} u:k$ ]. The adult responds to one with *not* [ $j_{\frac{1}{2}} u:k$ ] [ $j_{\frac{1}{2}} u k$ ] *noodle*, and to the other with *it's not* [ $j_{\frac{1}{2}} u:k$ ] *it's* [ $j_{\frac{1}{2}} u k$ ]. Such a turn-type, then, which performs correction on the child's pronunciation by juxtaposing in a turn a representation of the problematic articulation and its replacement correction, must be regarded as an option available to the adult, but one which is not taken up in the labelling interaction, where phonetic correction is recurrently not explicitly marked. Once again this points to the differential status awarded lexical and phonetic considerations in picture book labelling talk, such that working on articulatory issues, unlike working on lexical ones, is not centrally its interactional business.



### 6.3 APPROACHING THE CONVERSATIONAL DATA

The preceding discussion has summarised the findings from analysis of the picture book corpus as presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five, and has considered, in particular, some of the characteristics of labelling interactions which appear to be associated with their accomplishment of instructional work. The remainder of this chapter will use these findings as a basis for the analysis of data from conversational exchanges between the adults and children, taking place without orientation to picture books.

It could be argued that the kind of picture book labelling engaged in by the adults and children in the corpus is a highly restricted activity, and that the talk which it generates is therefore of a specialised kind. While this activity would seem to be prevalent in western cultures, and to form a part of the interactional environment of a large proportion of children growing up in those cultures, it may nonetheless, for many of those children, form only a very small part of that environment, which will be dominated by a range of other kinds of interactional activity. And some children, of course, may never engage in picture book labelling at all. The means which have been identified in this study, then, by which labelling sequences allow work to be performed on linguistic aspects of the young child's talk, may be considered supplementary or even tangential to a more general understanding of the role of the young child's interactional environment in shaping the development of linguistic skills.

If, however, the findings from that analysis can be applied to a consideration of data from more mundane conversational settings involving young children and adults, and if comparisons can be drawn between the two kinds of data, then a more compelling picture may emerge of the extent to which young children are regularly and routinely involved in interactions which work in some way on their developing linguistic skills. One application of the analysis of the picture book data, then, where certain didactic

mechanisms have been explicated, is in providing a yardstick by which to measure the extent and nature of instructional modes of talk in everyday adult-child interaction.

As was explained in Chapter Two, the approach taken to analysis of the conversational data has not involved the same kind of systematic progression through a data set as was possible for the picture book data. Instead, the findings from the analysis of picture book sequences have been used as a basis for an initial comparative examination. The analysis of the conversational data, then, has closely specified objectives, and does not aim at any kind of comprehensive description of those features of mundane adult-child conversation which may be instructional or concerned with some kind of linguistic didacticism. Instead, the analysis in the following section will focus on a comparative treatment of the issues arising from the preceding analysis, as summarised in Section 6.2. It will consist of three subsections. First, consideration will be given to the extent to which labelling, as an routinised activity, recurrently forms a part of interactions which are not concerned with picture books. Second, the analysis will show how an adult's response to a young child's utterances, which are not explicitly presented for evaluation in the way that labelling utterances are, nonetheless very often takes the form of an evaluative receipt, which may evaluate, among other things, linguistic qualities of the child's contribution. Finally, some instances of repair in this data will be examined, and consideration will be given firstly to the greater incidence of clarificatory work on the child's utterances in mundane conversation than in picture book labelling, and secondly to the means by which corrective work on those utterances is managed.

## **6.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM THE CONVERSATIONAL CORPUS**

### **6.4.i The Incidence Of Labelling Sequences Within Mundane Conversation**

A first point to note about the conversational data is that it carries many instances of sequences which look and sound exactly like those found in the picture book setting. It

would seem that just the same kind of labelling activity can develop, and frequently does, without the prop of a picture book. Labelling occurs in the corpus in a variety of settings. Other kinds of pictures than those displayed in books, of course, can motivate labelling. For example, the following three sequences, like extract (117) considered in 6.2.iv, occur when adult and child have just completed a picture jigsaw puzzle:

(118) (SF)

1 → adult : ooh what's that

(3.3)

1 → adult : what is i:t

2 → child : hors:ie

3 → adult : a ho:rse yes

(119) (SF)

1 → adult : e who's tha:t

(1.0)

2 → child : man

3 → adult : mmhm and what's these

(120) (SF)

1 → adult : ·hhhh and what- what's this he:re

(1.8)

2 → child : ho:rsie

3 → adult : ho:rsie (.) and m m what are  
those down there

The numbered arrows indicate the way in which these sequences follow just the same three-part structure of *elicitation*, *label*, *receipt*, as the labelling sequences from the picture book data.



Similar labelling sequences develop when the adult and child are engaged in drawing their own pictures. The following two sequences from this kind of setting both involve the adult in supplying the label, but they nonetheless conform to a basic labelling structure:

(121) (SF)

1 → adult : know what that is  
(0.8)  
child : u:h  
(1.2)  
child : what's this  
adult : that's a t:ree  
(1.0)  
1 → adult : what is it  
(0.9)  
2 → child : tree:  
3 → adult : mm shall we put some more leaves  
on

(122) (SF)

```

1 → adult :      triangle (.) and what's that
                        (2.1)
      adult :      s:quare
                        (0.9)
2 → child :      squaa:re
3 → adult :      yea h (.) ((sounds of pen on
                        paper)) 'n' that's a (1.5)
                        ci:::rcle

```

Of course, it is not only pictures which stimulate labelling. The following labelling sequence centres on a model cow which the child is playing with:

(123) (SF)

- 1 → adult : what's tha:t  
(1.9)  
2 → child : h:orsie  
(.)  
3 → adult : ooh ·hh 's a horse looks like a  
cow to me:  
(0.8)  
2 → child : co:w  
3 → adult : co:w hh

And labelling is not only stimulated by objects and representations which are physically present. The adults and children in the corpus also regularly engage in similar testing and naming activities, centring on people and objects figuring in the child's recent experience:

(124) (SF)

- 1 → adult : who has a do:die  
(1.0)  
2 → child : lewis:{( )  
3 → adult : {lewis does yes

(125) (SF)

- 1 → adult : where did we go yesterday  
child : ·hhh  
(0.6)  
2 → child : ·hh ma:dge  
(1.4)  
3,1 → adult : ('member) no we didn't go 'n' see  
ma:dge but we went on the-  
(1.0)  
1 → adult : we went on the-  
(0.6)  
2 → child : trai:n  
3 → adult : trai:n yes

In all these cases, the adult initiates a labelling sequence by eliciting a labelling or naming action from the child, and when the child produces an appropriate label it receives a confirmation from the adult in next turn. A number of structural similarities between these sequences and those examined in the previous three chapters can be pointed to. First, some features of the adult's elicitations and receipts will be explored, before consideration is given to the implications of the pervasiveness of this kind of sequence in adult-child talk.

## Elicitations

Like most of the picture book labelling elicitations presented in Chapter Three, most of the adult elicitations in these labelling sequences are built as WH-questions, both those elicitations which deal with the labelling of here-and-now objects (*what's that, who's that, what's these, what's this here, what are those down there, what's that shape*), and those which deal with labelling from memories (*who has a dodie, where did we go yesterday, who came round yesterday*). A fill-the-blank strategy may also be used, as illustrated by the following sequence, taken from extract (125) above:

(126) (SF)

|   |         |                                           |
|---|---------|-------------------------------------------|
|   | adult : | ('member) n <u>o</u> we didn't go 'n' see |
| → |         | ma:dge but we <u>w</u> ent on the-        |
|   |         | (1.0)                                     |
| → | adult : | we <u>w</u> ent on the-                   |
|   |         | (0.6)                                     |
|   | child : | trai:n                                    |
|   | adult : | trai:n yes                                |

In the following example, a fill-the-blank elicitation is built out of a child's earlier utterance:



(127) (SF)

- adult : then I'm going to get ready for  
wo:rk hhh  
(1.6)
- child : (going to) marjorie house
- adult : y:ea 'n' you go to marjorie's  
house  
(1.5)
- adult : ((click)) the:re hh good boy  
aren't you  
(2.5)
- adult : mummy go to wo:rk h (.) and ian  
→ go to-  
(0.6)
- child : [ $\beta_{\underline{a}} \cdot \gamma_{I \cdot \gamma} ] h_{\underline{a}}$
- adult : marjorie's house ye:s

In response to the adult's statement, *I'm going to get ready for work*, the child utters *(going to) Marjorie's house*. The adult confirms the appropriacy of this with *yea*, and by building a version of the child's utterance opening with *and* she displays her interpretation of the child's utterance as having been contingent on her own prior statement: the child will go to Marjorie's house at the same time as, and indeed as a consequence of, the adult's going to work. After a further comment (*there good boy aren't you*), the adult then explicitly juxtaposes the propositions of her first turn and the child's, by combining them in a fill-the-blank elicitation, *Mummy go to work and Ian go to-*. Just as in the fill-the-blank elicitations examined in Chapter Three, the end of the adult's turn is marked by stepped level high pitch, which appears to project completion by the child. The child's completion, [ $\beta_{\underline{a}} \cdot \gamma_{I \cdot \gamma} ] h_{\underline{a}}$ ], is receipted and affirmed by the adult in just the same way as other labelling turns, with *Marjorie's house yes*.

The above extract shows how a labelling elicitation can be built out of the child's preceding talk. The opening of the sequence which was represented in extract (124),

produced below, reveals the fill-the-blank elicitation here, too, to draw on a similar source. In this case, the completed utterance constructed from the fill-the-blank task itself becomes a labelling elicitation:

(128) (SF)

((the child has been engaged in sound play  
around the word *dodie*))

→ adult :      who has a:-

(0.6)

child : do:die

adult :      who has a do:die

(1.0)

```
child :    lewis:{( )
```

adult : { lewis does yes

The adult picks up on the child's prior sound play around the word *dodie* (which does not appear to have been motivated by anything in the adult's immediately preceding talk, although in the course of its duration the adult herself produces an utterance of *dodie*), and builds a fill-the-blank construction with *dodie* as its target. This construction, completed by the child with *dodie*, is not a statement as in extract (127), but is itself an eliciting question, which the adult then presents to the child, *who has a dodie*. The child's *dodie*, then, is not evaluatively receipted by the adult, since on its production an eliciting question is completed. It is the child's response to this WH-question elicitation (*Lewis*) that receives an affirmation from the adult (*Lewis does yes*).

This sequence demonstrates that the child is able to respond appropriately to cues to engage in a fill-the-blank style of labelling, irrespective of the syntactic construction in which such an elicitation is framed. The adult's *who has a-* is open to interpretation as an as-yet-incomplete WH-question elicitation which the adult herself may be taking time

over completing. The child, however, after only just over half a second<sup>75</sup>, responds with the element which fills the blank, *dodie*. This indicates the importance of prosodic cues in projecting this kind of action from the child. In (128), the adult's *who has a* is uttered with level pitch in mid range, and the article *a* is long in duration. In fill-the-blank sequences throughout the corpus, the adult's elicitations are uttered on either high or mid range (but never low) pitch; always end with a level pitch contour, and may have level pitch throughout; and in several cases have a lengthened final syllable. Extract (128) suggests that these prosodic cues may override the syntactic construction of an adult turn in successfully inviting a fill-the-blank action from the child.

Extracts (127) and (128) also point up the important observation that labelling, in the form of the elicitation of target words from the child, can derive not only from objects and pictures being visually oriented to, but also from the child's own talk. If a child's own spontaneous utterances can be built, by the adult, into fill-the-blank labelling constructions, then it would seem that any number of things can be characterised as 'labellable'. Labelling, then, becomes a relevant activity in a wide variety of sequential contexts, as well as in a wide variety of situational ones, and defies description as a restricted or specialised enterprise.

Further similarities between the elicitations under consideration here and those found in the picture book data can be elaborated. Two structural features of picture book labelling elicitations which were discussed in Chapter Three are the use of *oh* and *ooh*, and the use of *and*, in their construction. Both features can be seen in the labelling elicitations from other settings under consideration here. In extract (118), representing a labelling sequence centring on a jigsaw puzzle, the adult prefaces her *what's that* elicitation with *ooh*:

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<sup>75</sup>Considering the timing of the child's responses throughout the corpus, this may be regarded as a relatively swift response.



(118) (SF)

→ adult : ooh what's that  
(3.3)  
adult : what is i:t  
child : hors:ie  
adult : a ho:rse yes

This *ooh* preface, in the same way as those discussed in Chapter Three, would seem to effect a 'mock noticing', and be designed to direct the child's attention to the referent of the labelling activity.

And these elicitations can also, just like those in the picture book labelling data, be constructed as a list, by the use of *and*:

(119) (SF)

adult : e who's tha:t  
(1.0)  
child : man  
→ adult : mmhm and what's these

(120) (SF)

→ adult : ·hhhh and what- what's this he:re  
(1.8)  
child : ho:rsie  
→ adult : ho:rsie (.) and m m what are  
those down there

(129)<sup>76</sup> (SF)

→ adult : triangle (.) and what's that  
(2.1)  
adult : s:quare

---

<sup>76</sup>This is the opening of extract (122).

In Chapter Three, the way in which the use of *and* in labelling elicitation builds them into a coherent series was outlined. The fact that these elicitation also make use of *and* in the same way indicates that, just as in the picture book setting, participants are here engaging in BOUTS of labelling activity, the coherence of the actions in that series being explicitly marked. And this is not just the case when there is an array of physical objects or representations present to be named. The labelling of people and places from the child's memory can take a similar form:

(130) (SF)

|           |                                  |       |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------|
| adult :   | who came round <u>y</u> esterday |       |
|           |                                  | (0.8) |
| child :   | [dʲʊ̃.ə̃]                        |       |
|           |                                  | (0.9) |
| adult :   | <u>i:a:ne</u>                    |       |
|           |                                  | (1.0) |
| child :   | j{ane                            |       |
| adult :   | {ja-                             |       |
| → adult : | and where did we <u>go</u> :     |       |

The use of *and* in the adult's second elicitation, *and where did we go*, indicates a bout of labelling to be in progress.

If bouts of labelling can occur anywhere in child-adult interaction, when adult and child are engaged in some other activity such as drawing pictures or simply chatting, then it would seem necessary that the opening of this kind of activity should be marked in some way, since the child must be able to recognise when labelling is being embarked upon. In the conversational data, bouts of labelling activity are typically opened with an elicitation which makes explicit the demands being placed on the child. The labelling sequence of which extract (130) above forms a part, for instance, is opened with the following elicitation:

(131) (SF)

adult :        can you remember who came  
                 yesterday ian

Similarly, an elicitation which opens labelling in a picture drawing session takes the following form:

(132) (SF)

adult :        know what that is

These elicitations spell out the remembering and knowing abilities which are being tested in the child, and thus indicate labelling to be under way.

## Receipts

As in the picture book setting, a feature which marks these sequences as being instructional in some way, is the presence of an adult evaluative receipt in third turn position in the sequence. In Chapter Four, three basic turn shapes were identified for the affirmatory receipting turns found in picture book labelling sequences. These were:- a turn consisting of a confirmation marker like *yes* or *mmhm* alone; a turn consisting of a repeat of the target label presented in the child's prior turn combined with a confirmation marker; and a turn comprising the target label alone. All three turn shapes are found in the labelling sequences in the data under consideration here, and are illustrated in the three extracts below. The first and third extracts occur in labelling from a jigsaw puzzle, the second in quizzing from the child's memory.

(119) (SF)

adult :        e who's tha:t

(1.0)

child :        man

→ adult :        mmhm and what's these



(133)<sup>77</sup>(SF)

adult : we went on the-  
 (0.6)  
 child : trai:n  
 → adult : trai:n yes

(120(SF)

adult : ·hhhh and what- what's this he:re  
 (1.8)  
 child : ho:rsie  
 → adult : ho:rsie (.) and m m what are  
 those down there

In Chapter Five it was observed that the third of these turn shapes, a repeat of the target label, is often produced with some kind of prosodic matching to the child's prior turn, and it was suggested that this matching, by minimising the prosodic contrastivity between child and adult versions, helps to construct the adult's turn as an affirmation (in the absence of a confirmation marker like *yes*), since prosodic contrastivity in repetition is associated with the work of correction. Just the same kind of prosodic matching is evident in receipting turns taking this turn shape in this data. The following adds some phonetic detail to extract (120):

(134)(SF)

adult : ·hhhh and what- what's this he:re  
 (1.8)  
 → child :  $\begin{array}{c} \text{—} \quad \backslash \\ \hline [h_0^{\theta?} f_5 i] \\ \hline \underset{\tau}{\tau} \end{array}$   
 → adult :  $\begin{array}{c} \text{—} \quad \backslash \\ \hline [h_0^{\theta?} s \cdot i \cdot] \\ \hline \underset{\tau}{\tau} \quad \underset{\tau}{\tau} \end{array}$  (.) and m m what are  
 those down there

---

<sup>77</sup>This is part of extract (126).

The child's utterance rises slightly in pitch over the first vocalic portion, and falls to mid range in the second. The adult's, while it falls to low over the second vocalic portion, nonetheless follows a very similar rise in the first, peaking at almost exactly the same pitch as the child's. While the child's utterance has glottal closure before the friction in the middle of the utterance, the adult's has a long vocalic portion before friction, thus matching the rhythm of the utterance with that of the child's version.

The affirming receipts, then, in labelling sequences which take place outside picture book reading, are selected from just the same set of options as were seen to be available in that setting - just as the elicitations in these sequences are constructed in the same ways as picture book labelling elicitations.

### **Discussion: the pervasiveness of labelling**

It is apparent that labelling is an activity which is engaged in by adults and young children without the aid of picture books. The sequences outlined in this section share many design features with the sequences examined in Chapters Three, Four and Five, and appear to be directed towards accomplishment of the same order of social activity. Adults clearly engage in testing young children's lexical abilities in many settings other than when they are looking at picture books. And these sequences too, like those surrounding picture books, can be seen to be concerned not just with testing the child's abilities, but also with *WORKING ON* those abilities. The ways in which this work is accomplished will be examined at greater length in Section 6.4.iii, in a consideration of the management of repair in this data. Here, I will cite two sequences presented earlier which illustrate the way in which the labelling activity performed in this greater range of settings goes beyond simple testing, and involves, like picture book labelling, rehearsal on the child's part. In both extracts the child fails to produce the target label in response to the adult's elicitation, and it is the adult who supplies it. In both cases the child ends up articulating the appropriate label:

(122) (SF)

```

adult :      triangle  (.)  and what's that
                        (2.1)
→ adult :      s:quare
                        (0.9)
→ child :      square
adult :      yea h  (.)  ((sounds of pen on
                        paper))  'n' that's a  (1.5)
                        ci:::rcle

```

(121) (SF)

adult : know what that is  
(0.8)

child : u:h  
(1.2)

child : what's this

→ adult : that's a t:ree  
(1.0)

→ adult : what is it  
(0.9)

→ child : tree:

adult : mm shall we put some more leaves  
on

In (122), the child's failure to respond to the adult's eliciting question results in the adult producing the target label, *square*. The child then produces a version of *square*, which is receipted as appropriate with the adult's *yea*. In (121), the child responds to the adult's eliciting question by turning it back on the adult, *what's this*. The adult responds with an informing turn, *that's a tree*, which is not immediately met with a child version. That it invites a child version, however, is made apparent by the adult's following it up, after one second, with a prompting question, *what is it*. The child responds to this with a version of the target, *tree*, which the adult then receipts (*mm*). These sequences, then, are concerned not only with the retrieval of known labels, but



also with the articulation and rehearsal of unknown ones. That is, they work on the child's linguistic abilities in just the same ways as picture book labelling sequences do.

The fact that adults and young children label many different sorts of objects around them, and engage in labelling not only when they are looking at picture books but also when they look at other pictures, draw shapes, play with toys - in short when they engage in the myriad activities which occupy a young child's time - is important in highlighting the many opportunities which arise for a young child and adult to become involved in working on the child's linguistic skills. This observation alone is sufficient to undermine any characterisation of labelling talk as a specialised, context-specific style of interaction. What is much more important, however, is the fact that labelling does not rely on there being any physical objects or representations present to be labelled. Not only can the child's familiarity with objects, people and experiences from memory be called upon, at any time, for participation in bouts of labelling, but it has been seen that the adult can also pick up on the child's preceding talk to build labelling targets out of it. This means that the class of items which may become labelling targets is very large indeed, as is the range of sequential contexts in which labelling may occur.

It thus becomes valuable to take a view of the notion of 'context' which is rather different from that taken in traditional sociolinguistic analyses of language use in its various social settings. It is a view propounded by conversation analysts and clearly exemplified by Heritage (1984a: 280-290), which rejects the notion of context as something which is EXOGENOUS to the interaction, brought to the talk by virtue of external factors, and to be used as a resource for interpreting the talk's accomplishments. Instead, as Heritage (1984a: 283) suggests,

we can begin to think of 'context' as something *endogenously* generated within the talk of the participants and, indeed, as something created in and through that talk.

In other words, adult and child can be identified as being engaged in labelling in the sequences presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five, not because they have a book in front of them and are pointing in turn to the pictures in it, but because the talk in those sequences takes a particular three-part structure, involving the display and evaluation of the child's linguistic knowledge. It is this which constitutes the activity of labelling; thus, participants are engaged in labelling whenever their talk takes this particular structure. And the analysis presented in this section has shown that talk between child and adult can take this structure in a wide range of 'situational' contexts - a range which is perhaps so wide as to be boundless, since labelling targets can be built, it seems, almost anywhere, out of a child's spontaneous vocal productions and instances of word play. Labelling, then, is seen to be a widely prevalent activity engaged in by adults and young children, not because large numbers of children and adults regularly read picture books together, but because it is a much more pervasive, interactionally constructed, activity, created through a particular design of talk which takes place in many different situational contexts.

#### **6.4.ii Adult Receipts Of Children's Utterances**

It has already been argued at some length that an important feature of labelling interaction which constructs the activity which it accomplishes as an instructional one is the adult's evaluative receipt which follows a child's labels in third turn position in sequence. Such a turn retrospectively marks the adult's eliciting question as an 'exam' question, and characterises the adult as being in possession of its target answer. Consideration of the conversational data, however, suggests that this kind of evaluative receipting turn is widely prevalent in adult-child interaction, in many positions other than in third turn position in a labelling sequence. If an evaluative receipt types its speaker as having been in possession of the information presented in a prior utterance, before that utterance was produced, it may do that work in sequential contexts other than in third turn after a question.



**Consider the following sequence:**

((telephone has just been mentioned))

child : [dʒɪˈneɪtɪtɪz]

The child makes an observation concerning a friend and a telephone, which he begins to repeat in face of no response from the adult, although his second version (for whatever reason) trails off in the middle of the word *telephone*. In light of the telephone (in relation to a phone call with another friend) having been mentioned in the immediately preceding talk, and in light, also, of the adult's *jossy was on the telephone*, these two child turns would seem to be making an observation relating to the memory of an event which has been sparked off by this prior talk.

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But the adult takes none of these options. Instead she builds a turn which has three parts. First, she produces a confirmation marker, *yea*. Then she presents an interpretation of the child's utterance, *jossy was on the telephone*, followed by a tag question, *wasn't she*. Two of these components look very like the components of a receipting turn in labelling. There is a confirmation marker, and there is a version of what the child has said. By building her response in this way, rather than in those outlined above, the adult takes a particular stance in relation to the child's turn, which is very like the stance taken by the adult in a labelling sequence. That is to say, she casts herself in possession of the information carried by the child's turn, and also as arbiter over that turn's appropriacy. She treats it, in other words, not as an independent contribution to the conversation, but as a display.

A further example is the following:

(136) (SF)

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| child :   | $[d_{\underline{\epsilon}} d_{\underline{\epsilon}}^j \upsilon d_{\underline{\alpha}} \upsilon \varphi_{\underline{\alpha}} k^{xh}] \cdot h =$<br>$[d_{\underline{\alpha}} d_{\underline{\epsilon}}^a c : d_{\underline{\theta}}^j \upsilon d_{\underline{\theta}} \upsilon \varphi_{\underline{\alpha}} \cdot k] =$ |
| → adult : | =it <u>i</u> is jojo's sock goodness<br>you've rem <u>e</u> mbered tha <u>a</u> :t from a<br><u>l</u> ong <u>t</u> ime ago: (.) ·h that's<br><u>w</u> ee:ks since you <u>b</u> orrowed tha:t                                                                                                                         |

Here the child gives two versions of an utterance which sounds like *there's Jojo's sock*. The two versions follow swiftly from one another, hence the second does not appear to be motivated by any lack of response on the adult's part. Phonetic improvements are traceable between the two versions. The second has backer more rounded vocalic components in *Jojo* ( $[d_{\underline{\theta}}^j \upsilon d_{\underline{\theta}} \upsilon]$  rather than  $[d_{\underline{\epsilon}}^j \upsilon d_{\underline{\alpha}} \upsilon]$ ), and a lower, backer vocalic portion in *sock*  $[\wedge]$ . Phonetic self-monitoring on the child's part, then, may be what prompts him to produce a second attempt.

The adult's response, latched to the child's second version, carries no *yes* or other confirmation marker. However, the opening of that turn, *it is Jojo's sock*, which presents a version of the child's utterance in an affirmative frame, with prominence on *is* (realised in part by low falling pitch in an environment of high level pitch, and by length), is nonetheless marked as a confirmation. It therefore treats the child's utterance, not as an item of news or a preliminary to a discussion of Jojo's sock, but as a display of some kind.

The adult's turn does, however, carry a 'news-receipt'. *Goodness* is the kind of object which, like *oh* and *really*, can display an orientation to the news quality of a prior. However, the news receipt in this case is interestingly placed. A *goodness* which had appeared adjacent to the child's turn might indeed have receipted, from that turn, an item of news. However, the *goodness* in this case FOLLOWS a confirmation (*it is Jojo's sock*), and, moreover, is followed by an account for its own occurrence, *you've remembered that from a long time ago*. This *goodness* is thereby displayed to be a response, not to the proposition carried by the child's utterance, but to the act of his uttering it now and here.

In both the preceding examples, the adult responds to a topic-initial utterance on the part of the child with a turn which, by confirming it, takes a knowledgeable stance with regard to the proposition contained within it. Rather than receiving the child's statements as items of news, or as topic-openers, these adult turns instead confirm that they are accurate statements - that Jossy WAS on the telephone, and that it IS Jojo's sock. These kinds of sequences would appear to be part of the constitution of an adult-child relationship whereby the adult is credited with a greater degree of knowledge than the child, and is granted, moreover, a higher level of authority on the validity of the child's reported observations. A relationship (which is in part constructed by this very kind of talk) holds between the two participants, such that the adult is in a position to ratify the child's observations.

## Next turn ratification of linguistic content: imitations

In the two sequences just considered it is the propositional content of the child's turn which is being ratified - the fact that Josy was indeed on the telephone, and the fact that the sock belongs to Jojo. However, on examining the data it soon becomes apparent that the adult can take the same authoritative stance with regard to linguistic aspects of the child's utterances. Consider the following three extracts:

(137) (SO)

((This extract opens with the adult making a request for the child to pass her some keys))

adult : can I have them

child : uhh n:o::=

adult : =o(h)h y(h)ou t:ea:sing m(h)e ·hh  
y(h)ou little mo:ns:ter

(0.6)

child : [m<sup>h</sup><sub>+</sub>ə·tɪ]

→ adult : mo:nster yes

(138) (SO)

adult : these are a pair of [w<sup>h</sup><sub>+</sub>:ɪdʃvɔ̃n·s:]  
< >

child : [b<sup>h</sup><sub>+</sub>p:<sup>e</sup><sub>+</sub>g·e<sup>h</sup>]

→ adult : w(h)i(h)de fr(h)o(h)nts  
y(h)e(h)s: ·hh

(139) (SF)

((child playing with toy cow and fence))

adult : 's cow behind the fence isn' it

(4.2)

adult : u:h (.) sitting on the fenc:e  
(.) that's a good place to be

(.)

child : [ɛ̃ʔ<sub>+</sub>t<sub>+</sub>ə̃ f<sub>+</sub>ɛ̃ ð̃ n<sup>2</sup><sub>+</sub>g.]



adult : m (h)y(h)e(he)s  
 child : [nə̞(ɪ)zənɛfɛ̃t̚s]  
 → adult : sitting on the fence yes

In each case, the arrowed adult turn carries a version of the child's prior utterance, and a confirmation marker, *yes*. The adult, then, appears to be confirming what the child is saying. But in every case, too, the child's prior utterance which the adult is confirming turns out to be a version of part of the adult's turn which preceded it. The child's turn in these cases is not, then, the same kind of turn as the child's turns in (135) and (136), because it occupies a different sequential position. The child's turns in (135) and (136) are heard to be observations of some kind, partly because they are sequence-initial contributions to the exchange. The child's turns in these three cases, by contrast, not only follow a prior adult turn - they are partial imitations of that turn. They pick up part of that turn and have a go at articulating it. What the adult is doing, then, by producing a confirmation in next turn, is confirming these child utterances AS appropriate imitations - as being, indeed, an acceptable version of what she herself just said.

In (137), the child's imitation, [m̃ʔ̚ɸ̚t̚i], of the adult's *monster*, is phonetically quite close to the adult target. In (138), on the other hand, the child's [b'p̚:̚e̚e̚h] looks, on the face of it, very unlike the adult's [w̃ʔ̚iɸ̚ṽɔ̚n̚s:]<sup>78</sup>. However, there are similarities. Both utterances open with labiality ([b'] and [w]) and a vocalic portion with an open, backish and unrounded quality which moves to around mid height. The consonantal portion in both utterances has friction coinciding with voicelessness ([p̚] and [f]), and also alveolarity ([t̚] and [d]). In the later part of both utterances there is a vocalic portion with a mid-high quality. In rhythm, too, the two utterances are closely matched, with a long first vocalic portion in both cases, which also carries an increase in loudness. There are, then, several shared features between the two versions, which seem to be enough for the adult to treat the child's

<sup>78</sup>It is apparent from the talk surrounding this extract that what is being talked about is a pair of Y-fronts. The adult, however, in both her utterances, can be clearly heard to articulate *wide fronts*.

version as a version of her own utterance, and, moreover, to confirm it as such. And in (139), the child's first version, [i<sup>2</sup>t<sub>2</sub>ə<sup>2</sup>f<sub>2</sub>ə<sup>2</sup>n<sup>2</sup>g<sub>2</sub>], receives a confirmation marker alone (yes), while a second, phonetically improved version, [nə<sup>2</sup>g<sub>2</sub>(l)<sub>2</sub>zən<sup>2</sup>f<sub>2</sub>ə<sup>2</sup>t<sub>2</sub>g<sub>2</sub>], receives a confirmation comprising, like those in (137) and (138), a repeat of the child's turn and yes.

In these examples, then, the adult is following a child turn with an explicitly evaluative response, and thereby is putting herself in a particular relationship to what is contained in the child's turn. She is casting herself as arbiter - but not, in these cases, as arbiter over the accuracy of the propositional content of the child's turns. Indeed, it would be difficult to identify the propositional content of the child's [m<sup>2</sup>ə<sup>2</sup>·t<sub>2</sub>], [b'p:<sub>2</sub>·g<sub>2</sub>·h<sub>2</sub>] and [i<sup>2</sup>t<sub>2</sub>ə<sup>2</sup>f<sub>2</sub>ə<sup>2</sup>n<sup>2</sup>g<sub>2</sub>·] in this sequential position. Instead, she appears to be evaluating their status as acceptable imitations of her own speech - that is, to be appraising their merit as linguistic productions. The child, by imitating the adult's utterances, treats those utterances as constituting some kind of target. The adult, by confirming those imitations, treats them as having hit that target. In other words, the child's contributions are being worked on in their capacity as articulatory objects.

### Next turn ratification of linguistic content in a variety of sequential contexts

Occurrences of the child's picking up parts of the adult's talk in the way illustrated in extracts (137) to (139) are common in the corpus. So too are instances of the adult opting to deal with such imitations by confirming them, as just illustrated. What is notable about those three examples, however, is that, in each case, the adult turn which forms the basis for imitation is relatively unconstrained with regard to the sequential implications which it carries. That is to say that the three adult utterances - *you little monster; these are a pair of wide fronts*; and *uh sitting on the fence that's a good place to be* - occupying the sequential positions which they do, place few restrictions on what may follow them as a relevant next turn at talk. None, for example, is a question

making an answer a conditionally relevant next action for the child to take. Instead, they are contributions to the talk which may be followed, unaccountably, by any of a wide range of next actions. For the child to follow them with an imitation, then, and for the adult to confirm that particular next action as an appropriate one to take - that is, for both participants to take 'time out' to deal with linguistic aspects of the ongoing talk - does not interfere in any significant way with the INTERACTIONAL business of the exchange.

However, where this focus on performative aspects of the child's talk becomes more noticeable, is where it interrupts an ongoing interactional sequence which looks, at its outset, to be taking a more clearly specified direction. Consider the following two examples:

(140) (SO)

|   |         |                                          |
|---|---------|------------------------------------------|
|   | adult : | right are we <u>going</u> to <u>meet</u> |
|   |         | jani:na                                  |
|   |         | (1.7)                                    |
|   | child : | ( ( ) ((grizzles))                       |
|   | adult : | {mm                                      |
|   |         | (2.2)                                    |
|   |         | <hr/>                                    |
| → | child : | [n·i:əna <sup>h</sup> ]                  |
|   |         | <hr/>                                    |
| → | adult : | [n·i:nā] ye:s                            |

(141) (SO)

((the adult is changing the child's nappy))

|  |         |                              |
|--|---------|------------------------------|
|  | adult : | d' y' want some <u>cream</u> |
|  |         | (2.2)                        |
|  | adult : | <u>cream</u>                 |
|  |         | (2.5)                        |



→ child : [k<sup>h</sup>ʋ<sub>τ</sub>ẽ<sub>τ</sub><sup>e</sup>]  
→ adult : °cream yes°  
(1.5)  
child : [k<sup>a</sup>ʋĩ:ŋ:k<sup>j</sup>ẽ<sub>τ</sub><sup>ʃ</sup>]

In both sequences the adult asks a *yes/no* question (*are we going to meet Janina; do you want some cream*) and thereby makes relevant a *yes/no* answer from the child. In both cases, the adult meets the child's non-response to that question with a prompt, which in (140) takes the form of *mm* (with rising pitch) in face of the child's grizzling, and in (141) a repeat of *cream*, uttered with a high narrow rise-fall pitch contour, similar to (though slightly lower than) that of its first occurrence, in face of a 2.2 second silence. The child responds, not with a *yes/no* answer, but with a repeat of part of the adult's turn - *Nina* in (140), and *cream*, which formed the adult's prompt, in (141). And what the adult does, in both sequences, is to confirm that repeat, with *Nina yes* and with *cream yes*. In (140), the adult's *Nina* not only mimics the abbreviated form of the name produced by the child; it also copies the child's version in having a similar rise-fall pitch contour, and in the rather long duration of the first part of the utterance. It is built, that is, in a form which has been seen throughout the corpus to be typical of adult confirmations, in that it matches the prior child version on a number of prosodic parameters. What the adult is doing, in both these cases, is affirming the appropriacy of the child's turn as an imitation - dealing with it on a linguistic level - and not addressing, as she could have done, the fact that the child has not answered her original question. In neither case is the question reformulated or an answer to it pursued. In (140), the adult's confirmation is followed by 8.6 seconds of silence, and in (141) the child produces two versions of *cream* which come off as 'sung' and appear to be instances of sound play. There is, then, no return to the original adult question - no evidence of its non-answer being an accountable absence.

This raises a query around what the import might be of the adult's opening question, and suggests two possibilities for a somewhat idiosyncratic design to this talk. Either

the adult is formulating questions which do not have the sequential implications they appear to have, such that these *yes/no* questions do not, in fact, seek a *yes/no* response from the child, or, alternatively, work on linguistic issues pertaining to the child's talk can at times override other interactional concerns, such that participants are diverted from the routine sequential implications of turns at talk to take up opportunities for engaging in this kind of work.

The following opening to a sequence, appears to supply a particularly stark example of this phenomenon:

(142) (SF)

- adult: (alright) do you want to get some  
du:plo out  
(0.7)  
→ child : e ·hh hh slippers  
→ adult : °y(h)e(he)s slippers°

The adult's first turn presents the child with a question, *do you want to get some duplo out?*, and is therefore a turn which carries closely specified sequential implications: on its completion, an answer to that question is made conditionally relevant. However, the child's following turn, *slippers*, appears not to be, in any intelligible sense, an answer to the adult's question - nor, indeed, any kind of contingent response to it (as, for example, a response such as *I don't know*). Nor is it, unlike those child turns considered in the previous extracts, any kind of version of part of the adult's prior turn. But it, too, like the child turns in those extracts, receives an affirmative response from the adult - this time with a turn in which the ordering of the two elements, confirmation marker (*yes* produced with laughter) and a version of the child's utterance (*slippers*), are reversed (*yes slippers*).

In order to build a claim that the adult, by responding to the child's turn affirmatively in this way, is doing something rather special, in not treating that turn as a sequentially







of her turn, *yes slippers*, is marked out from this redoing by being quieter, and by a speeding up of tempo over *slippers*. This second version of the question is thus marked as a 'restart' (see Local 1992b), a doing again of her opening question - but not as one which makes explicit an orientation to the question's not having been addressed the first time round. One way of displaying such an orientation would have been to REFORMULATE the question in some way, and thereby to address the child's disattendance to it. An example is supplied by an extract from a picture book labelling sequence, presented in Chapter Three:

- (24) (CC)
- adult : ooh ((points)) what's that
- (2.8) ((child moves about  
in chair))
- adult : what is it

The adult's second question in this extract is presented, not as a redoing of his first one, but as a FOLLOW UP to it. It credits the child with having registered the question, but not, for some reason, being disposed to address it. This is quite different from what happens in (143). Nor, in (143), is the redoing produced louder or on higher pitch than the original question, like the restarts (in adult-adult conversation) which Local (1992b:285ff) describes, which thereby seem to be presented as entirely new contributions to the exchange. In this case, both pitch and loudness between the two versions is closely matched, so that the second version comes off as a straightforward rerun of the first. The intervening talk - the child's *slippers* and the adult's response *yes slippers* - is thus framed as an 'insertion sequence', which takes a kind of side step out of the ongoing business of the talk.

Such insertion sequences are not uncommon in question-answer sequences in talk. Recurrently, however, these insertion sequences turn out to be contingent on the

original question. An example is the following, taken from Schegloff (1972: 78), and cited in Chapter One:

- A : Are you coming tonight?  
→ B : Can I bring a guest?  
→ A : Sure.  
B : I'll be there.

In this case, the insertion sequence (*Can I bring a guest? - Sure*) itself takes the form of a question-answer sequence, and can be seen to be contingent on A's original question - to be a step taken on the way to arriving at the answer to that question, which is produced in the fourth turn.

Now, in (143), the child's turn *slippers* may indeed be, as far as he is concerned, a contingent response to the adult's opening question, *do you want to get some duplo out?*. As the sequence turns out, we may be able to suggest that what the child meant by uttering *slippers* here was something to the effect of "No, I don't want to get some duplo out: I want to play with my slippers". However, it is NOT treated in this way by the adult. Whereas, in the extract cited above, A treats B's *Can I bring a guest* as contingent on the original question, by providing a response (*Sure*), in (143) the adult, by running off her original question again, instead treats the insertion sequence which opens with the child's *slippers* as a non-contingent, parenthetical sequence of talk.

In (143), then, the adult and child take time out from a question-answer sequence for the child to produce an utterance, *slippers*, and for the adult to produce an affirmative response to it. At least, this is what the adult's replay of her question CONSTRUCTS the participants to be doing. What remains to be considered is the order of work which is accomplished by this insertion sequence.



A first observation is that the adult COULD have replayed her question directly after the child's *slippers* - could, that is, have treated the child's *slippers* not only as non-contingent on her question but also as not inviting an adult response. Instead, she opts to respond affirmatively to the child's turn. Given that the child's turn is treated as one which invites acknowledgement of some kind, one possibility which could be argued for is that the adult is treating the child's *slippers* as a noticing on the child's part, which happens to have broken into an ongoing sequence of talk, and that she is affirming it on that basis. This possibility cannot be entirely refuted. However, it is notable that the adult, in selecting from a number of turn-type options which might have done this work, such as *yes*, or *yes there are your slippers*, or *yes aren't they nice*, for example, selects a turn-type which combines a confirmation marker with a repeat of the child's utterance - a turn-type which has been seen, throughout the analysis so far presented, to do the work of confirming a child's utterance on LINGUISTIC grounds. It would seem, then, that what the adult's *yes slippers* in this sequence is doing, like the corresponding adult turns in extracts (137), (138), (139), (140) and (141), is ratifying the child's prior turn on its own merits as an articulatory object, rather than as an interactional one.

### **Discussion: the pervasiveness of affirmation as a locally relevant next action**

In this subsection, it has been seen that an adult's affirming receipts, in next turn position after a child's utterances, are not restricted to being a feature of a particular species of interactional activity which we might call 'labelling', but are a much more pervasive feature of adult-child talk. By an adjacently placed affirming receipt, the adult can ratify both the propositional content of a child's turn, and also its adequacy as a linguistic production. The young child often picks up parts of an adult's utterances for articulation - seems to treat the adult's talk, that is, as a resource from which to select bits of language to experiment with - and the adult, by the use of an affirming receipt, can approve these rehearsals and displays. In doing this, the adult is treating



the child's utterances, not as sequentially located contributions to the interactional business of the talk, but as articulatory performances. Where it becomes particularly apparent that the child's talk is being divorced in this way from the interactional context in which it occurs, for the purpose of attending to its linguistic merits, is where this ratification takes place in the midst of an ongoing sequence of talk, and diverts its participants (sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently) from the course laid out by that talk's routine sequential implications.

Two observations can be made regarding these findings. The first is that the analysis presented in this subsection underlines the importance, widely recognised in conversation analysis work, of NEXT TURN as a position in interactional structure where participants recurrently display their interpretation of a prior action, and hence sustain, through the progress of the talk, a fabric of intersubjective understanding. It is through the adult's next turn actions that her or his orientations to a child's utterance are displayed. That is, an adult's orientation to the linguistic and articulatory aspects of a child's prior turn are displayed in this data by an adjacently placed affirmatory receipt of the kind identified in the preceding analysis. This recognition of next turn as "a basic structural position in conversation" (Drew 1990: 5), by which participants' own interpretations and analyses of the ongoing talk are unfailingly displayed, supplies a much more sophisticated basis for an examination of the relationship between child and adult turns in this kind of interaction than does the notion of 'feedback' which was discussed in Chapter One.

The second point raised by the analysis presented here is that, since the adult can take 'time out' from certain kinds of interactional sequence (like a question-answer structure) to affirm a child's utterance on linguistic grounds, it may be that there are few, or even no, restrictions on where, in sequential terms, this kind of affirmation may be produced. This raises the question of whether this kind of affirmation may occur, in child-adult interaction, in a rather similar way to the occurrence of its converse

- repair - in talk generally. As was indicated in section 6.2.ii, repair is a phenomenon which is locally relevant throughout talk. While there are organisational principles governing the precise details of how and when repair is managed in various ways (see Schegloff et al. 1977), it is nonetheless a general principle of talk-in-interaction that participants may, at any point in the talk's progression, divert from the course of its immediate interactional business to deal in some way with problems which arise concerning the transmission or interpretation of that talk. In ordinary mundane conversation between adults, participants may, on occasion, be impelled to correct a co-participant's errors in the realm of pronunciation or word choice. They will rarely be moved to AFFIRM such things, since, generally speaking, they are not attuned to the kind of linguistic monitoring of their co-participant's talk which would motivate such affirmation. Utterances which are linguistically unproblematic will simply be 'not repaired', allowed to pass unhindered, affirmed, that is, by default. But in adult-child interaction - at least in interactions involving children of the age group under consideration here - it may be that adults are engaged in just this kind of linguistic monitoring of the child's talk, such that affirmation of a child's productions becomes, like repair, a locally relevant next action for the adult to take, throughout the progress of the talk.

#### **6.4.iii Repair Work In Mundane Conversation**

The pervasiveness of a phenomenon whereby adults affirm the linguistic appropriacy of children's utterances, as seen in the previous section, suggests that adults, when interacting with children of this young age, may take on a role of arbiter and linguistic monitor of the child's talk as it is in progress. It therefore becomes pertinent to consider the incidence of repair in this data. If the adult freely ratifies a child utterance on articulatory and lexical grounds, is the initiation of repair on linguistic aspects of a child's turns similarly unconstrained? In the consideration of the picture book data in earlier chapters it was suggested that, in labelling sequences, other-correction of the child's talk on the part of the adult is a dispreferred activity, as has been documented



for other-correction generally in variously situated kinds of talk, while other-INITIATION of repair on the adult's part is both unconstrained in its occurrence and particularly explicit in its design. In mundane conversation, it will become apparent that, while the design of the talk presents many opportunities for the adult to engage in 'embedded' forms of repair, explicit initiation of corrective work on the child's utterances appears to be just as restricted as has been documented for other-initiation of repair generally, in the talk which occurs between adults. In considering these matters, I will first of all give some attention to the various activities which are subsumed under the label of 'repair' in talk-in-interaction, and point to the greater incidence of 'clarificatory' forms of reparative activity in mundane conversation as compared with picture book labelling. Attention will then be given to the ways in which corrective repair work is enacted on a child's utterances, both in those sequences which have been identified (in section 6.4.i) as accomplishing a labelling activity (while not being concerned with picture books) and also in other sequential contexts.

### **Varieties of repair: clarificatory and corrective**

The notion of 'repair' in talk is used to cover a broad range of interactional phenomena, and casts its net much more widely than simply to be concerned with the correction of identifiable errors of various kinds in participants' contributions to the talk. As previously mentioned, repair has been characterised as "the self-righting mechanism for the organisation of language use in social interaction" (Schegloff et al. 1977:381), and, as such, can be addressed to problems of hearing, understanding, and interpreting the relevance of a co-participant's talk, as well as problems raised by the identification of something amiss in that talk. In other words, the interactional medium, as well as the component parts of the messages transmitted via that medium, can itself give rise to troubles needing reparative attention. Repair attempts, then, can be divided into two basic categories:- those which deal with aspects of transmission and interpretation (hearing, understanding, making sense of what a co-participant is saying); and those which adopt a stance of taking issue with, or finding fault with, what has been said on



some level - that is, of perceiving an error of some kind to have been made. I will refer to these two categories as *clarificatory* and *corrective* kinds of repair.

In the picture book corpus, clarificatory repair work on a child's turns is rare. In only two out of a hundred labelling sequences does the adult meet a child's label with a turn which appears to be explicitly directed towards doing investigative or clarificatory work on that labelling utterance. The two examples are extracts (65) and (66):

(65) (TA)

adult : ri:ght 'n' what's tha:t

(0.5)

child :  $[^h p^u z q]$

(.)

→ adult : what

(66) (TA)

adult : o::h what's that

(.)

child : [ b e . <sup>v</sup> k <sup>xə</sup> p . <sup>ũ</sup> ]

(0.6)

→ adult : a what

As was argued in Chapter Four, in (65), the repair initiator *what*, makes no claim as to the kind of turn which its prior was, while *a what* in (66) treats its prior as a nominal and therefore as probably a label. Neither is specific as to the nature of the problem carried by the child's turn, but in view of the phonetic oddity of the child turns in both these cases, both would seem to be addressed to the issue of unintelligibility.

The rarity of this kind of clarificatory work in the picture book corpus can be accounted for by the fact that in this kind of talk the child's utterances are tied to an explicit referent (the picture) which both parties are oriented to, and for which the adult is in



child : ((gaze to adult))  
           baby [kʰ<sub>7</sub> a<sub>7</sub> w<sub>7</sub> i<sub>7</sub> j<sub>7</sub> ɛ<sub>7</sub> h:↓ a<sub>7</sub> ] daddy's  
           fla:t (0.5) yester{D:A::Y  
 adult : ((cough))  
 adult : ((click)) O::h baby carrie (.)  
           ye::s we did didn't we...

Here, the adult uses a sequence of turn-types which do the work of displaying that she has trouble with the child's prior utterance. Her first turn is a repeat of part of the child's turn incorporating the question word *what*, which locates the troublesome part within it. Her second turn offers a candidate interpretation of the child's utterance, *baby cow*. Her third turn is a very quiet *mm*, which follows almost a second's silence after the child's third version of her opening utterance. This is treated by the child as indication that the adult is still having difficulty: at this point the child turns her gaze to the adult and supplies a context for the troublesome utterance, *baby Carrie at Daddy's flat yesterday*. Here, the adult's *oh baby Carrie*, displays a "change of state" (Heritage 1984b) from incomprehension to comprehension, before she ratifies the child's observation with *yes we did didn't we?*, thereby displaying her interpretation of the child's prior turn as amounting to something like "we saw baby Carrie at Daddy's flat yesterday".

The prosodic shape of this turn demarcates the two kinds of work which it accomplishes. The first part, *oh baby Carrie*, which signals resolution of the trouble, is uttered with high pitch which falls to low. The second part, beginning with *yes*, is marked as disjunctive from this by starting on a high pitch and following a narrow rise-fall over *yes*, which has long duration. Not only is the second part of the turn syntactically built as a receipt of the proposition carried by the child's turn: it appears to be built prosodically as a contingent response to that turn, notwithstanding the fact that there has been intervening talk. The clarificatory work enacted on the child's opening



turn is thus built as an extended insertion sequence, which temporarily interrupts the interactional business of the talk.

Langford (1981) has conducted a detailed investigation of the design of such clarification sequences in caretaker-child interaction, and MacLure (1981) has described a wider variety of means by which adults engaged in interaction with young children design their turns to 'make sense' of the child's talk. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider these issues in any detail. Instead, my purpose in introducing them here has been threefold. Firstly, the recurrence of clarificatory repair work in the conversational data points up, by comparison, the rarity of its occurrence in picture book labelling. This highlights an idiosyncratic feature of the child's contributions in labelling talk in that they are utterances for which, routinely, a referent is established. This means that the adequacy of those utterances, on linguistic grounds, can more directly be accessed than is the case for many utterances in mundane conversation where one must establish WHAT a child is saying before one can evaluate HOW it is being said. Secondly, clarification sequences are a further means by which adults work on young children's talk. In seeking to clarify a child's utterances, adults engage in INVESTIGATIVE work, which may be a prerequisite for the kinds of evaluative work which are the more immediate concerns of this study. They represent a further class of adult utterances whose focus is a retrospective one on the child's prior turn, rather than a prospective one which contributes to the onward progression of a topic of talk. As will be discussed further in the concluding section of this chapter, this retrospective focus of an adult's contributions may well be a hallmark of the design of adult-child interaction.

The third reason for introducing the notion of clarificatory repair is to delimit the scope of the kinds of repair work which are more directly of concern here. In the remainder of this section, the incidence of corrective repair work in the conversational data will be considered. By this term, I refer to all kinds of repair work by which issue is taken

with the adequacy of the child's turns in some way, or by which the perception of an error is implied. To describe the adult as engaging in corrective repair work, of course, does not imply that she or he is necessarily engaged in doing correction: one can initiate repair by inviting self-correction from the child. Nonetheless, such initiation takes a similar standpoint of orientation to a correctable, and can therefore be characterised as a form of corrective (rather than clarificatory) repair. In what follows, consideration will be given to the incidence of this kind of repair work in the conversational data, firstly in the kinds of labelling sequences which were identified in section 6.4.i, and then in a wider variety of sequential contexts.

### Corrective repair work in labelling sequences

When the child is engaged in labelling pictures and objects which are physically present, it is clear that, just as in the picture book setting, a clear distinction can be drawn between a hit and a miss on the child's part, since for these utterances, too, the existence of an accessible target means there are right and wrong labels. When the child labels a picture of some sheep with *cow*, or labels a model cow with *horse*, then the adult, just as with comparable errors in the picture book data, initiates corrective repair work:

(145) (SF)

|   |         |                                               |
|---|---------|-----------------------------------------------|
|   | adult : | mmhm and what's <u>these</u>                  |
|   |         | (1.5)                                         |
|   | child : | c: <u>o:w</u> :                               |
|   |         | (0.5)                                         |
| → | adult : | c <u>o:w</u> don't <u>think</u> so ·h I think |
|   |         | <u>that's</u> a co{ :w                        |
|   | child : | {sh <u>sheep</u>                              |
|   | adult : | <u>sheep</u> ye:s                             |

(123) (SF)

adult :        what's tha:t  
                      (1.9)  
child :        h:orsie  
                      (.)  
→ adult :        ooh ·hh 's a horse looks like a  
→                cow to me:  
                      (0.8)  
child :        co:w  
adult :        co:w hh

The adult's repair initiation in (145), *cow don't think so I think that's a cow*, with 'contrastive stress' (loudness and pitch which is higher than the surrounding talk) on *that*, withholds correction, and so appears to invite correction from the child. While the two corrective statements carried by this turn, *don't think so* and *I think that's a cow*, are both mitigated to some extent by being furnished with apparent uncertainty<sup>79</sup>, this turn nonetheless builds a contrastive frame for the ensuing correction by the child, and points quite clearly to the nature of the error.

The repair initiation in (123), *ooh 's a horse looks like a cow to me*, supplies the correction, but once again presents it with the appearance of diminished authority on the part of the adult (*looks like a cow to me*). This turn does not explicitly reject the child's label; indeed, it appears to ratify it (*'s a horse*). Instead, rejection is implicitly accomplished by this part of the turn being built as a news receipt. The adult's *ooh* makes a claim that she has undergone a change of state of knowledge (Heritage 1984b) on receipt of the child's label - a claim which displays the child's utterance to have been 'news' or unexpected - which implies that the child's label has not hit the target. And indeed, the child treats this turn as a correction, by supplying a version of *cow* in next turn; and this interpretation is ITSELF treated as appropriate, when the adult affirms that version of *cow* with a prosodically matched repeat of it.

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<sup>79</sup>Compare this formulation with, for example, *no that's the rhinoceros* in extract (67), section 4.3.ii.



In both these cases, the adult's repair initiation is constructed in a rather more indirect way than those repair initiations found in the picture book data, by affecting a stance of diminished authority on the part of the adult. This may well point to something of a loosening of the constraints which demarcate the roles of adult and child when they are engaged in a picture book labelling session. However, this stance is shown to be of little consequence, since the adult's repair initiations can be seen to accomplish just the same work as those in the picture book data. They are treated in the same way by the child, who clearly DOES orient to the adult's authority in these matters, and who follows them with a corrected labelling utterance. They also follow swiftly from the child's troublesome labelling turn, leaving no opportunity for self-initiation of repair by the child, and they do the same work of pointing quite explicitly to what, among many possibilities, is the nature of the child's error.

When the child is engaged in labelling people and places from memory, on the other hand, it seems that repair strategies are less direct. This kind of labelling activity calls on the child's power of recall of events, as well as of linguistic objects, and any failure on the child's part to produce the appropriate label may therefore be treated as a failing, or a delay, in the performance of this non-linguistic ability. In the following sequence, two labelling tasks are presented to the child. The first is presented in the first line of the extract with the adult's *can you remember who came yesterday Ian*; the second with a further elicitation, *and where did we go*. The numbered arrows indicate the opportunities given to the child for producing an appropriate response to each of these two elicitations:

(146)<sup>80</sup>(SF)

adult :        can you remember who came  
                 yesterday ian

1 →

(1.2)

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<sup>80</sup>This is an extension of extracts (125) and (130).

1 → child : m:a:mmy  
 adult : who came t- who ca:me  
 1 → (0.6)  
 adult : who came round yesterday  
 1 → (0.8)  
 1 → child : [dʰʃ̃.ẽ]  
 1 → (0.9)  
 adult : j:a:ne  
 (1.0)  
 child : j{ane  
 adult : {ja-  
 adult : and where did we go:  
 2 → (2.5)  
 2 → child : [dʰʃ̃.ẽmʰ]  
 2 → (. )  
 2 → child : [dʰʃ̃.ẽmʰ]  
 adult : where did we go yesterday  
 2 → child : ·hhh  
 2 → (0.6)  
 2 → child : ·hh ma:dʒe  
 2 → (1.4)  
 adult : ('member) no we didn't go 'n' see  
 ma:dʒe but we went on the-  
 2 → (1.0)  
 adult : we went on the-  
 2 → (0.6)  
 2 → child : trai:n  
 adult : trai:n yes

The adult treats the child's first turn in this sequence as not being a response to her eliciting question: rather than addressing the inappropriacy of the child's *mammy*, she reformulates her question twice in next turn, and once again in face of no response after a 0.6 seconds silence. Only after the child has produced another utterance which clearly misses the target, [dʰʃ̃.ẽ], does she supply a correction, *Jane*.

Following the adult's second elicitation, *and where did we go*, the child produces two consecutive versions of an utterance which sounds like *Durham*, a candidate answer to the question. However, this response is neither rejected nor affirmed but, as in the earlier part of the sequence, the adult reformulates her eliciting question. Again, it is only after the child has scored another miss, *Madge*, that corrective work is embarked upon, this time with a turn which explicitly rejects the child's prior, and invites self-correction from the child with a fill-the-blank construction which targets a specific aspect of the journey<sup>81</sup> (*'member*) *no we didn't go 'n' see Madge but we went on the*). This elicitation is presented a second time in face of no child response, and this second version eventually elicits a child response which is affirmed as being appropriate.

It would seem, then, that corrective repair in this kind of labelling is organised rather differently from repair in sequences which test the child's knowledge of the names of physically present objects and representations. In the kind of 'quizzing from memory' sequences exemplified by (146), the boundaries around what counts as a hit would seem to be less closely specified. In addition, the child's failure to score a hit can be attributed to factors other than the child's not knowing the word. This is made explicit in the adult's repair initiation following the child's wrong answer, *Madge*. At the opening of the adult's turn there is a quiet vocalisation which sounds like *remember*. The adult is treating the child's wrong answer as being possibly due to a lapse of memory concerning the facts, rather than any linguistic inadequacy. A distinction can be drawn, then, between two kinds of labelling sequence. When physical objects and representations are present to be labelled, the targetted lexical item is closely specified. Moreover, any failure on the child's part has a narrower range of possible origins. In these cases, corrective repair initiation on the part of the adult is typically promptly offered and explicitly expressed. By contrast, when labelling calls upon the child's memory of people and events there may be a wider range of possible hits to the target.

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<sup>81</sup>It is an open question whether *train* would have been an acceptable response (a hit) to the question *where did we go?*.



There may also be a wider range of factors to which a miss may be attributed. In these sequences, then, corrective repair initiation is typically neither so swift nor so direct. In neither case, however, is there any counter-evidence to a routine dispreference for other-correction.

### **Corrective repair in other sequential contexts**

It was seen in section 6.4.ii that there seems to be little constraint on where, in an interactional sequence, an adult can ratify the linguistic appropriacy of a child's utterance with an affirming receipt. The findings from that section suggest that, at any number of positions in the progress of talk, the adult can opt to treat a child's contributions to the exchange on linguistic, rather than interactional, grounds. This observation might give rise to an expectation that corrective repair in adult-child talk is similarly pervasive - that adults orient just as freely to correctable linguistic features of the child's talk as to affirmable ones. However, this appears not to be the case. Instances of outright other-correction on the part of the adult in the conversational corpus are very hard to find. So, too, are instances of the kind of explicit other-initiation of repair that is found in labelling sequences.

#### **An instance of outright correction**

In the following sequence, however, the adult does indeed perform a particularly direct outright correction regarding articulatory aspects of the child's prior turn. This sequence occurs when the child is eating a boiled egg. In the week prior to the recording, the child has seen a boy called Luke at her father's flat. An apparent misunderstanding on the part of the adult, who interprets the child's articulations of *Luke* as repairable versions of *yolk*, gives rise to an extended repair sequence which continues over almost five minutes. Just the opening of the sequence is represented in extract (147):

(147) (YL)

- 1 adult : can get mo:re out if you do it  
2 with a sp- O:h that's good (.)  
3 mm (.) eat thatu (.) eat that  
4 yellow all up: (.) that's called  
5 the [jɛʊk<sup>w</sup>]  
6 (.)  
7 child : hhh ((looks up))  
8 (0.6)  
9 adult : inside the egg ((clears throat))  
10 (5.2) ((child continues  
eating))  
11 child : ((gaze to adult))  
12 → have seen [ju:k<sup>h</sup> h<sup>p</sup>↓ { ( ) }]  
13 → adult : ([jɛ·ʊk'])  
ɛ  
14 (.)  
15 child : ((gaze ahead)) e have seen  
16 [lu:k] ɔn DADdy's ·h (.) F:LAT:  
17 (0.8)  
18 child : yesterda:y mummy  
19 (1.3)  
20 adult : mm: (.) what did you see there  
21 child : ((gaze to adult)) hh ·hh [jəʊk<sup>wh</sup>]  
22 adult : [jəʊk<sup>wh</sup>] of an egg (0.6) did  
23 you  
24 child : ((picking nose))  
25 adult : [lu:k<sup>h</sup> hɛ:ʔ<sup>ə</sup> h<sup>p</sup>↓ { juk } at daddy's =  
> ~ { mm ((leaning  
across table for tissue))  
26 child : = fla:t  
27 adult : a:h I see  
28 (0.6) ((adult puts tissue  
to child's face))  
29 adult : let me do that no:se again

The adult's correction of the child's talk which is of interest here occurs in line 13. But before considering the means by which this correction is accomplished it will be useful to give some explication to the apparent misunderstanding which gives rise to it.

It seems apparent, both from evidence contained within this extract and from later parts of the sequence, that the child's articulations in lines 12, 16, 21 and 24 of this extract are all versions of *Luke*. After the adult's first articulation of *yolk* in line 5, the child temporarily breaks off from eating to look up ahead of her, in a way which suggests that this word might be sparking off some memory for her. Her turn in lines 15-18, *have seen* [ $\underset{\tau}{\downarrow} \underset{\tau}{u} : k$ ] *on Daddy's flat yesterday Mummy*, opens with just the same pitch configuration as her previous turn, *have seen* [ $j \underset{\tau}{u} : k^h$ ], which was interrupted by the adult's correction in line 13. This suggests that that earlier turn in line 12 was on course to take the shape which the turn in line 15 does, and locate the seeing of [ $j \underset{\tau}{u} : k^h$ ] in her father's flat. And while the articulatory details of the child's five productions of this word vary, it is notable that on the two occasions where her utterance of *Luke* can be seen to be in response to an overt misinterpretation on the adult's part - that is, in line 16 after the adult's correction in line 13, and in line 24 after the adult's [ $j \underset{\tau}{a} \underset{\tau}{u} k^w$ ] *of an egg* in line 22 - the child's version opens with laterality and alveolarity.

It is equally apparent, that the adult is NOT treating these articulations as versions of *Luke*. In line 20, after the child's *have seen* [ $\underset{\tau}{\downarrow} \underset{\tau}{u} : k$ ] *on Daddy's flat yesterday Mummy*, the adult is slow to respond, and does so with a long *mm* which rises from mid to high pitch. She follows this with *what did you see there?*. With prominence on *what*, such a question could locate [ $\underset{\tau}{\downarrow} \underset{\tau}{u} : k$ ] as a troublesome utterance in an otherwise clearly received turn. However, there is no such prominence on *what* in line 20. Instead, the question appears to respond only to the latter part of the child's turn concerning her father's flat, and not to address *have seen* [ $\underset{\tau}{\downarrow} \underset{\tau}{u} : k$ ] at all. In line 22, the adult closely mimics the child's utterance [ $j \underset{\tau}{a} \underset{\tau}{u} k^w$ ] with [ $j \underset{\tau}{a} \underset{\tau}{u} k^w$ ], closely



matching the vocalic qualities of the child's version, and differing in little other than the ejective articulation which terminates the utterance. But by her subsequent talk in this turn, *of an egg*, the adult also presents this utterance as a version of *yolk* - and thereby treats the CHILD'S version as having also been a production of *yolk*. And during and after the child's final two versions in line 24, the adult is clearly attending to the child's nose rather more than to her articulations. The adult's *ah I see* in line 27 is far from convincing as a signal of resolution of a problematic clarification issue - not least because it is not followed by any response to the proposition contained in the child's turn. Indeed, at several points in the talk subsequent to this extract the adult clearly treats the child's further clarification attempts as further versions of *yolk*.

It is apparent, then, that there is a misunderstanding between adult and child concerning the target of the child's utterance [j<sub>ɥ</sub>:k<sup>h</sup>] in line 12. For the child the target is *Luke*; for the adult it is *yolk*. And clearly, for this adult, on this occasion, [j<sub>ɥ</sub>:k<sup>h</sup>] scores as a miss on that latter target. What is of interest here is the way in which she deals with that miss. She produces a correction interruptively, in the midst of the child's ongoing turn, at the point when the child has uttered the troublesome word and taken an inbreath. At this point it appears clear that the child has not completed a turn but is engaged in ongoing talk. The correction, [j<sub>ɛ</sub>·ʊk'], is loud and produced on level pitch in mid range. It differs from the adult's version in line 5 partly by virtue of a vocalic quality which starts front, unrounded, and more open than that of the line 5 version, and which moves more slowly to having a close, back, rounded quality. By this, it effects contrastiveness with the child's [j<sub>ɥ</sub>:k<sup>h</sup>] in the prior turn, where the vocalic portion has a close, back and rounded quality throughout. That is to say, it emphasises the articulatory differences between the adult model in line 5, and the child utterance in line 12.

Correction, then, is being accomplished here in a particularly direct fashion, giving no opportunity for any degree of self-initiation of repair on the part of the child. And as

this sequence progresses, and misunderstanding continues, the adult produces more correcting turns. On one occasion she produces *not* [j<sub>ɹ</sub>u:k] [j<sub>ɛ</sub>ʊk] *noodle*, and on another, 's *not* [j<sub>ɹ</sub>u:k] *it's* [j<sub>ɛ</sub>ʊk]. On both occasions, the correction *yolk* is produced on higher pitch than the surrounding talk, with a falling contour. In the second case it is also considerably louder than the surrounding talk. The correction is thus being built into a contrastive framework, both by its *not x but y* syntactic construction, and by its prosodic design.

What makes this sequence all the more striking is that what is being repaired here are articulatory aspects of the child's talk. Even in the picture book corpus, where repair initiation has been seen to be particularly explicit, this is only the case for instances of lexical repair. Phonetic correction is never accomplished in a *not x but y* format, and indeed is often 'camouflaged' by taking the form of a delayed production of the target label which comes off as a re-elicitation. It was argued in Section 6.2.iv that this points to an important feature of labelling talk as being centrally concerned with lexical, and not phonetic, matters. In extract (147), though, the participants seem to be involved in a rather different kind of activity.

This activity is opened by the adult's talk in lines 3 to 5, *eat that yellow all up and that's called the yolk*. *Yolk* here is being presented to the child as a new word, a more specific term for what has been referred to as *that yellow*, and a word whose reference is clarified further in the adult's next turn, *inside the egg*. The phrasing of this presentation, *that's called the yolk*, marks it as an explicit instance of vocabulary teaching, and effectively sets up the adult's articulation of *yolk* as a target. It may be that after such a presentation, the adult will be particularly sensitive to a child's utterances which miss that target, since, on its production, articulatory rehearsal by the child is made relevant. The teaching of new words to the child, then, may be an activity which carries an idiosyncratic organisation of repair, since nowhere else in the corpus are there instances of outright correction of this kind performed on the child's



articulations. Indeed, repair initiations in the rest of the corpus can be seen to be accomplished in a particularly discreet fashion.

### Embedded correction

In the conversational corpus, many of the adult's responses to the child's utterances take the form of a repetition of some kind of that child utterance. These repetitions can be seen to be doing a variety of kinds of interactional work. Some, as has been seen, are associated with affirmative evaluation of the child's prior. Others are associated with clarificatory work of some kind. It is not within the scope of this study to consider in any detail the incidence of adult repeats of young children's utterances, or the wide range of interactional accomplishments of such repeats. However, it is notable that the prevalence of this kind of adult turn, which carries a repeat or partial repeat of the child's prior utterance, provides a number of opportunities for the enactment of an 'embedded' kind of repair on the child's turns.

Jefferson (1987) has identified a distinction between 'exposed' and 'embedded' correction in talk. Speakers have the option, when they engage in the correcting of one another's contributions, to make the activity of correcting the interactional business of the talk, or, alternatively, to turn it into a more discreet accomplishment. An instance of this latter, 'embedded', form of correction which Jefferson cites is the following:

- [TC:II(a):14:21:ST]
- Griff: Well I- uh I didn't know anyone: that  
→ knew anything about kilns except you:.
- J.R.: Whhhhuhhhuh ·hh Actually most've my  
→ experience's been in gas kilns though  
really
- Griff: I know it. That's what I keep telling  
→ myself. Why the hell do you fool with  
→ an electric ki(h)l when you can get a  
ga:s kil.



Here, the term *kilns* in Griff's first turn is replaced in J.R.'s with a different form, *kils*. While this turn is not marked in any way as doing the activity of correcting - does not address itself explicitly to that business - nonetheless, the 'corrected' version *kil* appears twice in Griff's subsequent turn. Correction, then, has been embedded into the ongoing talk, "without emerging to the conversational surface" (Jefferson 1987:86).

The extent to which it can be claimed that a second speaker in any sequence taking this shape is, by choosing to use a modified version of something in the prior speaker's turn, necessarily addressing in that choice some inadequacy in the prior speaker's version, is an open question. Such an orientation is inevitably hard to prove - all the more so in interactions between an adult and a young child where, as has already been discussed, an adult repeat of a child utterance is likely to carry many formal (particularly phonetic) differences from it. However, it may be that correction is properly viewed as an activity which does not require a corrective MOTIVE on the part of its participants. That is, if some feature of a speaker B's talk is taken up by a speaker A and used in REPLACEMENT of some feature in speaker A's prior talk, then it may still be appropriate to refer to the activity in which the speakers are engaged as correction, regardless of the extent to which speaker B's talk can be seen to be addressed to that work.

In the conversational corpus, the pervasiveness of adult next turn repeats of children's utterances supply many opportunities for embedded correction of this kind, dealing with a variety of correctable features of the child's talk. Here, two examples will be considered. In the first, the child's talk undergoes phonetic repair, and in the second syntactic repair takes place.

Extract (138) was presented in Section 6.4.ii as a sequence where the adult attends to the child's imitation of the adult's prior talk on linguistic terms, by affirming it with a turn which combines a repeat of the imitation (*wide fronts*) and a confirmation marker

(yes). It turns out that this repeat on the part of the adult, while apparently addressed to the work of affirmation, nonetheless supplies the child with a model for phonetic repair:

- (148) (SO)
- adult : these are a pair of [w<sub>+</sub>Λ:ĩdfvũñ·s:]
- child : [b'p̥:ẽɟ̥·e<sub>+</sub><sup>h</sup>] < >
- adult : [w<sup>a</sup>ɹ̥ʔəɹ̥d'fʊɹ̥ʔɹ̥n̥ʔs] y(h)ɛ(h)s:  
·hh
- child : [b<sub>w</sub>əɹ̥t̥·h̥<sup>ẽ</sup>]
- adult : l(h)ook at them

The child's first turn, [b'p̥:ẽɟ̥·e<sub>+</sub><sup>h</sup>], is rather unlike the adult's preceding [w<sub>+</sub>Λ:ĩdfvũñ·s:]. Nevertheless, as outlined in Section 6.4.ii, there are enough similarities to give the adult warrant to confirm the child's turn as an imitation of her own. After this confirmation, however, the child produces [b<sub>w</sub>əɹ̥t̥·h̥<sup>ẽ</sup>], which appears to be a further version of *wide*. If it is, it is a version which improves on his first attempt by picking up features from the adult's confirming turn. Specifically, it has (open) labial velar approximation at its beginning, and alveolar closure, [t̥·], at its end. The adult, in her following turn, *look at them*, displays no orientation to the corrected status of this attempt, but moves on with the topic of talk. Correction, then, is not here being made the interactional business of the talk.

The following extract suggests that syntactic repair work may be similarly embedded into the ongoing talk. Prior to this sequence, the child has selected an apple to eat. There has been some discussion between adult and child as to whether the apple chosen is a big one, a little one, or a medium-sized one:

- (149) (SF)
- child : o:h (1.0) big  
(0.8)
- child : big one apple
- adult : it's a big apple isn't it



(1.9)

→ child : ( ) li:ttle o:ne ·h appl:e  
→ a l little apple

adult : you've eaten all the l little  
appl:es

(1.0)

adult : you a:te them

The adult's first turn in the sequence, *it's a big apple isn't it*, is typical of the kind of utterance much cited in the child language literature as an 'expansion' of the child's preceding utterance. It reformulates the child's turn, presenting its perceived gist in a syntactically complete sentence, which makes use of an indefinite article rather than reproducing the ungrammatical combination of pronoun and noun which is found in the child's *big one apple*. The child then produces a parallel error with a different adjective in his next turn, *little one apple*. In the same turn, however, the child self-repairs this to *a little apple*, borrowing exactly the format of the adult's *a big apple*. Again, there is no indication in the adult's following turn of an orientation to error-correction having taken place, as with *you've eaten all the little apples* she advances the topic of talk. As with the phonetic repair in (138), correction of the child's syntactic error in (149) never reaches the conversational surface.

## Summary

This section has considered the incidence of repair in the corpus of mundane conversation between adults and children. A difference between this data and the talk involved in picture book labelling has been highlighted, in that the child's talk in mundane settings much more frequently gives rise to sequences of clarificatory work. This emphasises the need for a recipient of talk to know the target of an utterance, before being in a position to evaluate that talk on either linguistic, or truth value, terms.

With regard to corrective repair, when adults and children engage in labelling here-and-now objects and representations, it was seen that, just as is the case with labelling from



picture books, the adult typically withholds correction of the child's wrong labels, but nonetheless initiates corrective action in explicit and direct ways. Labelling from the child's memory was seen to be somewhat different in this regard, in that a child's errors are treated as having a range of possible sources, and initiation of repair by the adult is neither so swift nor so direct.

Outside talk in labelling structures, it was seen that, while adults may pervasively AFFIRM a child's utterances on linguistic grounds (as seen in the previous section), there is no indication that either correction of, or explicit initiation of corrective repair on, the child's linguistic productions is in any way a recurrent feature of this talk. Instead, opportunities are presented (by virtue of the pervasiveness of a variety of adult next turn repeats of children's utterances) for repair to be embedded into the talk and not made its interactional business. A counter-example to this tendency was presented, where the adult performs a series of outright corrections of the child's pronunciation of the word *yolk*. This example suggests that the rehearsal of new words in the child's vocabulary may be an activity type whose 'instructional' character is in part realised by the employment of an idiosyncratic organisation of repair in the talk in which that activity is couched.

## 6.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has reviewed some of the findings of the analysis of the picture book data presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five, and has extracted from those findings some of the features of picture book labelling talk which appear to play a part in its constitution as an 'instructional' style of interaction. The analysis of data from mundane conversational settings between adults and young children has been directed towards making an initial comparison with this talk, by taking those features as a starting point. The analysis presented in this chapter, then, has focussed on three areas:- the prevalence of labelling structures in variously-situated sequences of adult-

child talk; the extent to which a child's utterances receive next turn affirmation from the adult; and the means by which corrective repair on the child's talk is managed.

The scope of the chapter has necessarily been very limited. It has not been possible to provide any kind of overview of the range of features of mundane adult-child interaction which might be considered hallmarks of a linguistically-oriented 'working on talk'. Large areas of the domain of such an enterprise, such as the means by which syntactic aspects of the child's talk are attended to, for example, have been almost entirely overlooked. This is because syntactic features of the child's talk are not a focus of concern in the labelling talk (which deals predominantly with single words) which has set the terms of reference for this investigation. Nonetheless, the results of the initial examination of mundane child-adult talk presented here are suggestive, and are of interest for two main reasons. First, these findings, in their turn, shed further light on the analysis of the picture book data presented in earlier chapters, by helping to contextualise that talk and by providing a clearer sight of its boundaries. And second, the analysis presented here is suggestive of the extent to which adults and young children work on linguistic aspects of the child's productions, routinely, in their everyday interactions.

### **6.5.i The Scope And Nature Of Labelling**

The analysis presented in this chapter makes plain that labelling is not an activity which is restricted to the reading of picture books, but is one which takes place in a wide range of situational contexts. Labelling targets are derived from pictures and objects which the child is orienting to, from people and places featuring in the child's experience, and also from the child's own spontaneous productions. It is thus an activity which is brought into being, not through its participants undertaking some particular set of physical actions such as looking together at picture books, but through their engaging in a form of talk with a particular, three-part structural design, whereby a child's utterances are evaluated as lexical displays. The fact that this design of talk



occurs recurrently through the corpus indicates that labelling may be a much more widespread phenomenon in adult-child interaction than its association with picture books might suggest. The data which has been analysed in some detail in Chapters Three, Four and Five, then, may be regarded as representing a mode of talk recurrent in the interactions between adults and young children.

A further point about labelling which is highlighted by the non-labelling data examined in this chapter concerns the incidence of clarification sequences in the two kinds of talk. The pervasiveness of clarificatory work as a next turn accomplishment of many of the adult turns in the conversational corpus points up the scarcity of this kind of work in the labelling data. This underlines the rather unusual situation which pertains in labelling whereby a referent, and hence a target, for each of the child's utterances is known by the adult in advance. This is patently not a situation which pertains in the conversational corpus, or in most forms of talk, where one doesn't know what an utterance is aiming at until one hears it - and sometimes not until investigative work has been undertaken on it. In labelling talk, a child's utterances as lexical DISPLAYS are rather uncharacteristic linguistic objects.

#### **6.4.ii Working On Talk In Mundane Conversation**

A number of points emerge from the analysis presented in this chapter which indicate ways in which adults instigate work on young children's talk during mundane interactions. A first relates to the prevalence of clarificatory work, considered in the previous subsection.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), in outlining a model for the turn-taking organisation of conversation, have observed that turns at talk regularly have a three-part structure, which latches them to the turns on either side of them, and builds each turn into one of a series. The three components are described as follows:



one which addresses the relation of a turn to a prior, one involved with what is occupying the turn, and one which addresses the relation of the turn to a succeeding one (Sacks et al. 1974:722).

They cite the following example:

[Fat tape: 1]  
D : Jude loves olives.  
J: That's not bad.  
→ D : She eats them all the time. I understand  
→ they're fattening, huh?

The first part of the arrowed turn in this exchange, by the use of pro-terms, relates to its prior, and the tag question at its end projects a link to a next turn. Turns at talk, then, regularly are built into a series, by doing both retrospective and prospective work.

A striking feature of the picture book labelling interaction considered in earlier chapters, is that the adult's responses to a child's labelling utterances are regularly retrospective in focus. That is, they regularly evaluate the child's prior turn, either by affirming it or by initiating repair on it. Some also do prospective work, by building a next elicitation into the same turn as an evaluative receipt, but the main focus of these turns is a retrospective one.

In the conversational corpus under consideration in this chapter, the adult's responses to the child's turns are not constrained to accomplishing evaluative work in the same way as they are in picture book labelling. The set of turn-type options available to the adult in producing responses to the child's turns is a much wider one - just as those child turns themselves may be accomplishing a much broader range of actions than is the case in labelling, where a child's utterances are largely restricted to the work of supplying a label. Nonetheless, it is striking that, in the mundane data, not only do many of the adult's turns in fact concern themselves with an evaluation of the child's

talk, but also a large proportion of those which don't are concerned with clarificatory work on their priors, and thereby also take a retrospective stance. Rather than moving the topic of talk onwards, such turns undertake investigative work on the turns which precede them. When these instances of investigative work on the child's prior talk, which have only been touched on in this study, are considered alongside the instances of evaluative work which have been its central concern, the extent to which an adult's turns in interaction with a young child take a retrospective standpoint with regard to the utterances contained in the child's immediately preceding turns is indicated. An adult's turns in mundane adult-child interaction are indeed regularly occupied with working on the child's talk.

This point is related to the suggestion raised in this chapter that adults, when interacting with young children, engage in a linguistic monitoring of their interactants' talk. The fact that adults supply affirmatory next turns to a child's utterances in a way not found in adult-adult interaction (outside other instructional domains such as language teaching and speech therapy), and the fact that this kind of affirmation appears to be a locally relevant next action for the adult to take throughout the progress of talk, suggest that such monitoring is indeed taking place. These affirmations treat the child's utterances rather like labelling turns, in that they orient to them as - one could say they retrospectively build them into - linguistic displays. However, it would seem that this monitoring on the adult's part manifests in positive, but not in negative, appraisal. While linguistic appropriacy in the child's turns is pervasively affirmed, linguistic inappropriacy is not directly addressed in the same way. Instead, corrective repair on the child's utterances is typically neither promptly nor explicitly instigated by the adult, but is embedded into the talk in a disguised fashion.

Finally, the corpus under investigation here has not been large enough to explore in any systematic way the means by which new words are introduced to the child, but one instance of this activity which has been presented in this chapter raises some interesting

issues which are pertinent to the concerns of this study. When new words are presented to the child and rehearsal on the child's part is made relevant, utterances are being treated, as they are in a labelling situation, as lexical and phonetic objects. In the instance presented in this chapter, it was seen that repair on the child's articulations in this sequential context is particularly direct and explicit, in contrast to the organisation of repair pertaining elsewhere in the corpus. With regard to a pursuit of the line of investigation taken by this study, the means by which new words are introduced into the child's vocabulary in the course of mundane adult-child interaction holds promise as an area for further research.



## CONCLUSION

The preceding six chapters have presented a body of work addressed to investigating the ways in which the routine interactive talk which occurs between adults and young children can engage its participants in a collaborative shaping of the child's developing linguistic skills. This work has taken the form of a systematic, detailed interactional analysis of a corpus of picture book labelling interactions occurring naturally between young children and their caretakers, and a comparative examination of some more 'mundane' child-caretaker conversations. The aim of the short conclusion presented here is to assess the contribution made by the study and to highlight the directions for future research which its findings suggest.

Firstly, since detailed descriptions of adult-child interaction are scarce in the child language literature, this study has a contribution to make in documenting, by means of a systematic and detailed analysis, some of the characteristics of this kind of data. It therefore contributes to what is a relatively small body of knowledge in this area, particularly by focussing on talk involving children from an age group which has received less attention in work of this kind than have older age groups. By presenting an in-depth description of picture labelling interactions, the study focusses on an activity which, while recurrent in the homes of many young children and also the basis for many of the assessment and remedial activities undertaken in speech therapy clinics, has nonetheless received little detailed attention.

By employing the techniques of conversation analysis, the study has pointed up the sensitivities of this approach to the study of talk, and has underlined its relevance to linguists. By taking the participant-oriented view of interactive talk which CA advocates, one is able to make warranted claims about the functions, or interactional accomplishments, of linguistic objects. One is thus placed in a favourable position for undertaking an exploration of the detailed linguistic exponency of particular social

actions. CA therefore provides the tools for a particularly sensitive and valid kind of empirical linguistic analysis, which could fruitfully be employed in many more domains of linguistic enquiry than have so far benefited from the particular insights which it has to offer.

In the field of children's language development, this study has highlighted the particular benefits of bringing conversation analytic insights to bear on a reconceptualisation of the notion of the child's linguistic environment. There is a long research tradition within the study of child language which has been addressed to exploring both the nature of the developing child's linguistic environment, and the various ways in which that environment may facilitate linguistic growth. However, in most studies in this mould, the concept of 'linguistic environment' has been presented in terms of the 'input' which young children are exposed to, in the form of specific features of the speech with which adults address them. It has been argued, and demonstrated, in this study, that by taking this unidirectional perspective on adult-to-child speech these studies have been hindered in their advancement of our understanding of these issues, through their failure to grasp the complexities of interactive talk. Talk-in-interaction is inherently a two-way phenomenon, collaboratively constructed by its participants through the fitting of one action to a prior in such a way as to display and maintain, as the talk progresses, an intersubjective understanding of that talk's business and accomplishments. It is therefore inappropriate to approach the study of interaction, as traditional 'motherese' studies have done, by isolating and coding one participant's contributions to it, since this kind of approach cannot but distort its representation of the nature of talk. In addition, the coding schemes employed in traditional studies of this kind have tended to rely on arbitrary and ad hoc functional categories for linguistic objects, which have not been derived with any seriously warranted basis such as might be found through a consideration of the participants' own orientations, as displayed through their talk. In these two major ways, then, this research tradition has been limited in its progress.



However, the present study has shown that, by refining the concept of the child's linguistic environment so as to focus on the structure of the interactions in which young children routinely engage, the issue may be tackled by means of a somewhat more sophisticated approach. The findings of this study suggest that features of the child's linguistic environment, thus conceived, can indeed be pointed to as being of particular consequence for the child's linguistic advancement. While only certain of these features have been examined in detail here, it is likely that a review of other features traditionally associated with 'child directed speech', undertaken within a similar approach, would further advance our understanding of the role of the child's linguistic environment in the process of language development.

In taking this somewhat refined view of the linguistic environment of the child, a central concern of the study has been with the constitution of didacticism in talk - and specifically didacticism of a linguistic kind. It has been seen that the characteristic three-part structure of labelling talk, whereby a child's labelling utterances are routinely met with an adult's receipt, has an important part to play in this, since a child's labelling turns are thus awarded the status of displays, and evaluative work on those displays is built in to the design of the talk. This results in a rather different pattern of conversational repair from that which has been documented for other kinds of interaction. Specifically, it has been suggested that labelling talk exhibits an uncharacteristic organisation of repair initiation, such that opportunities for the self-initiation of repair by the child are reduced, and the design of other-initiation of repair by the adult is particularly self-explicit. Both factors reduce the responsibilities left with the child for a self-monitoring of the adequacy of the talk produced. This may turn out to be a characteristic feature of other kinds of talk which can be said to be involved in 'doing instructing'.

A particularly suggestive finding of the study is that more 'mundane', non-labelling interactions between adult and child have been seen to share many of the



characteristics of this didactic, labelling talk. While corrective repair in these interactions is managed rather differently, the same kind of third turn affirmatory adult receipt, which types its prior as a display, is found in non-labelling interchanges. These affirmatory receipts, occurring in a range of sequences in the conversational data, demonstrate that the child's utterances can be treated by the adult, not as sequentially located contributions to an exchange, but as articulatory objects which are being dealt with on linguistic terms. When these affirmations are considered alongside the many instances of clarificatory repair work with which an adult's turns are occupied, it becomes apparent that many of the adult's turns in this talk have a retrospective outlook directed to the child's prior productions, and thus address themselves to working, in different ways, on the child's talk. This kind of finding is suggestive of the more subtle ways in which the young child's routine linguistic environment may be implicated in the language development process.

Many directions for future research are suggested by the findings of this study. It would be interesting, for instance, to pursue this line of investigation in conversational data from older age groups. While the data under investigation here has not supplied evidence of unconstrained other-correction, as was suggested by Schegloff et al. (1977: 380-381) as possibly being a characteristic of adult-child talk, it may be that this is because of the particular age group represented here. An initial and unsystematic consideration of some data from a child of 3;0 begins to suggest that, at this age, instances of other-correction on the part of the adult are more frequent. This is supported by the findings of Cresswell (in preparation) in relation to data from children between the ages of 3;4 and 3;11. As a corollary to this, it would seem that clarificatory repair work on the child's utterances is less detailed at this age. It may be that, as the child's speech becomes more developed, so the target for any child utterance is more readily accessible to the adult, and hence misses on that target can be readily identified and will be addressed. With younger children, misses on an uncertain target are less easy to identify. It may be, then, that younger children's

utterances are not so often subject to correction by adults because these younger children are being awarded a greater degree of benefit of the doubt.

A further line of research suggested by this study would be to investigate ways in which grammatical aspects of the young child's utterances are worked on. This study, with its terms of reference set by picture labelling interactions, has been largely restricted to the two areas of lexis and phonetics, but much could be gained by looking at the ways in which a child's syntactic constructions are worked on in ordinary conversations. In Chapter Six it was seen that, in the conversational data, the linguistic monitoring of the child's turns undertaken by the adult manifested in positive and not negative evaluations. That is to say, while the child's utterances were explicitly affirmed, correction was either withheld or embedded, and repair initiations were indirect. If grammatical aspects of the child's productions were found to be treated in a similar way, a promising, and sophisticated, approach to the issues raised by the 'no negative evidence' debate of learnability theory (as discussed in Chapter One) would be opened up.

The study also suggests an exploration of other kinds of linguistic 'working on talk' than those which have been detailed here. It has already been indicated that the teaching of new words to the child, in interchanges like that presented in extract (147) in Chapter Six, might provide a fruitful arena in which to investigate further didactic structures in child-adult talk. The findings presented here could also inform an investigation of other forms of talk, such as speech therapy interactions, in which linguistic issues are worked on by the talk's participants. It could be very beneficial to be able to identify the means by which 'doing speech therapy' is accomplished, through the use of similar didactic structures.

Finally, one of the concerns of this study has been with some of the phonetic details of interactive talk - details of a kind generally passed over in conversation analytic



work. While this attention to detail has proved illuminating, it is recognised that, in addressing these issues, the work presented here has only begun to make steps into an area which holds much promise for further exploration. The consideration of certain prosodic aspects of labelling sequences presented in Chapter Five, for example, was largely limited to a description of pitch phenomena. While features of loudness and rhythm were noted on occasion, these parameters have not been systematically investigated in this study. However, the findings which the study has made in relation to the prosodic relationships holding between turns at talk suggests that much could be gained from further work in this area, not only in child-adult talk but in interactive talk more generally. For instance, an association has been made in this data between corrections and the doing of prosodic contrastivity of some kind. This accords with the findings of Local (1992b) in relation to some self-corrections in adult talk, and it would seem feasible to suggest that prosodic contrastivity is in a very general sense associated with the accomplishment of correction in talk. However, not enough is known of the phonetic details of talk-in-interaction to support any kind of strong claim that this is so. Clearly, the phonetics of interactive talk constitutes an area of linguistic enquiry which merits much further detailed research.



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